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ABSTRACT

This thesis, covering the years 1918-2000, is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 reviews the interwar history of non-Estonian education with particular emphasis on the diversity of the non-Estonian population, the legislation protecting the right of minority groups to mother tongue instruction, and the inclusion of Estonian language and civics courses in the curricula of non-Estonian schools. Chapter 2 examines the Soviet period with an emphasis on population shifts, the destruction of all non-Russian minority education, and the lack of attention to Estonian language in the Russian school curriculum. This chapter considers the debates over language and education in Estonia during the "glastnost" period. Chapter 3 examines the post-communist reforms in language education with particular attention to varying conceptions of integration, the need for improved Estonian-language programs in Russian schools, resistance to governmental reform, and the lack of material and human resources in Russian schools. Chapter 4 argues that the changes in Estonian-language programs stem primarily from grassroots efforts and examines experimental language-programs both within and outside the formal school system. Concludes with the findings of the thesis and issues for further research. Contains 3 maps, a figure, extensive chapter notes, and 138 sources. (BT)

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LEARNING TO INTEGRATE: THE EDUCATION OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKERS IN ESTONIA, 1918-2000

Kara D. Brown

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LEARNING TO INTEGRATE:
THE EDUCATION OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKERS IN ESTONIA, 1918-2000

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
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INTRODUCTION

While doing research in Estonia in 1997, I interviewed a family struggling to decide where to send a daughter for elementary school. The father, a Belarussian who speaks Estonian fluently, supported her enrollment in an Estonian kindergarten class. He believed that fluency in the national language, a skill that can be achieved most systematically through schooling in Estonian, would provide opportunities unavailable to monolingual Russian-speakers. The young girl's mother, a Russian who does not speak Estonian well, had a different opinion. She felt that their daughter should understand her culture and be taught in Russian. The young girl disagreed with both of her parents. She wanted to learn English instead of Estonian so that she could travel one day to Santa Barbara, the featured city of her mother's favorite soap opera.

The dilemma faced by this family presents itself to many minority parents in Estonia, who must answer, "Where do I send my child to school?" and "What impact will this choice have on my child's future?" Parents are confronted with this choice when they must pick one educational track for their child, instruction in Russian or in Estonian. They make their decisions based on the quality of education offered at Estonian and Russian schools, the opportunities for higher education and employment, and the desire to maintain their ethnic identity in an Estonian state. While non-Estonian parents struggle with issues of opportunity and maintaining ethnic identity, the Estonian government grapples with strategies to develop a civic identity and to guarantee minority rights.

One of the primary goals of post-communist education reform in Estonia is to create a school system that will aid in the integration of non-Estonians. In other words, the Estonian government wants to use education as a tool to transform Estonia's minorities into groups that understand and identify with Estonian language, culture, and history. The Estonian government, while not requiring a homogenous identity, does want to promote a civic Estonian identity. The governments of many multi-ethnic states use education for similar purposes. Anthony Smith maintains that,

> If ethnic cleavages are to be eroded in the longer term...this can be done only by a pronounced emphasis on inculcating social mores in a spirit of civic equality and fraternity. Part...of the contents of that education may be termed civic too. For it may be used to convey, through language (assuming there to be a *lingua franca*), history, the arts and literature, a political mythology and symbolism of the new nation....[1]

In view of the Estonian government's goal, it must be asked whether education is a viable means to integrate the Russian-speaking population into Estonian society. I argue that the Estonian educational system has the potential to be a powerful agent in the current integration process. The Ministry of Education's current strategy to ensure an effective Estonian-language program in Russian schools through the transfer of instruction to Estonian in grades 10-12 is misguided however. The disagreement over language education reform in

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1 Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 119.

post-communist Estonia does not revolve around whether there should be improved Estonian education in Russian schools, but rather which strategies are the most effective for Russian-speaking students. I posit that the Ministry needs to learn how to integrate the Russian-speaking population by carefully examining and building upon the existing Estonian-language programs. Through an analysis of these alternative strategies for language education, the Ministry of Education can refocus its efforts and resources on the regions most in need of higher quality Estonian classes. A Ministry policy of program enhancement and review will not only satisfy many of the critics, but also encourage local participation in the development of Estonian-language programs that began in 1991.

Three important developments contribute to the possibility of integration through education: (1) the widespread support for improved Estonian-language programs among both Russian- and Estonian-speakers, (2) the creation of Estonian-language programs that are adapted to regional strengths and weaknesses, and (3) the Estonian government's commitment to recognizing minority rights. First, the majority of Russian-speakers and Estonians have a vested interest in the success of revised Estonian-language programs in the Russian schools; this is the cornerstone of any integration effort. The realities of the current socio-political environment in Estonia, where residents need some competence in Estonian in order to participate in the country's educational, professional, and political life drive parental support for improved Estonian instruction.

Second, educators and parents are willing to commit their energy, time and money to the creation of Estonian-language programs suitable for their students. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian and Estonian educators have been developing innovative language programs in Estonia and testing new methods of Estonian instruction. These creative efforts are supported by many Russian-speaking families who demand and pay for higher-quality Estonian-language programs in their schools. Third, the Estonian government's tolerance towards state minorities is a positive post-communist development. Since 1991, the Estonian government has articulated its commitment to minority rights through various laws, particularly the Law on Cultural Autonomy.

Despite auspicious signs that schools can be used as a vehicle for the social integration of Estonia's Russian-speaking minority, there are several obstacles to successful reform. First, the material and human resources for the improvement of Estonian-language programs are still insufficient. Second, while many Russian-speakers recognize the need for improved Estonian-language courses in their schools, they are reluctant to surrender Russian as the language of instruction, precisely what the Estonian government plans to implement at the upper secondary level (grades 10-12, see Figure 1 appendix). After all, for many Russian-speakers, the Russian school is a symbol of security and the continuity of Russian language and culture in Estonia. Joshua A Fishman, a sociolinguist, claims that the Russian-speakers' attitude is not unusual,

> Disadvantaged populations are particularly dependent on this symbolism [of national language] since they lack the full array of other public symbols that advantaged populations display. The use of the disadvantaged language in the school is a symbolic statement in and of itself. It says, 'We are here. We exist. We remain faithful to ourselves.' The use of the disadvantaged language in the schools is a statement of public legitimacy on behalf of populations that possess few other symbolic entree into

the public realm.[2]

The role of schooling in the integration of Russian-speakers presents numerous difficulties. First, there is the problem of terminology. The two most crucial terms for this thesis are "Russian-speakers" and "integration," yet both terms are contested. The term "Russian-speakers" refers not only to ethnic Russians but also to other minorities (e.g. Ukrainians and Belarussians) who use Russian as their language of communication and are not ethnically Russian. "Russian-speakers" is awkward since it categorizes people by language and not by ethnicity. Since I focus in this thesis on the students who are enrolled in the Russian schools, a category which includes students of different nationalities who are all generally native Russian-speakers, I have chosen to use this somewhat awkward term.[3] An additional term crucial to this thesis, yet not without its difficulties, is "integration." According to the definition of the *United Nations Human Development Report* for Estonia, integration is

> a process, within which the non-Estonians residing in Estonia will join the local society's affairs as full-fledged participants. Integration means a gradual disappearance of these barriers, which are currently preventing many non-Estonians from becoming competitive in the Estonian labor market, benefiting from the educational opportunities, participating in the local culture and political affairs....Integration is not a change of ethnic identity; integration is not a loss of something, but the acquisition of new qualities necessary for survival in a modern Estonia.[4]

I rely on the above definition of integration when I use the term in the thesis.

The second challenge posed by this topic is connected with the evaluation of integration. A discussion about integration should address the extent to which integration has been achieved, but how does one evaluate integration? Should citizenship statistics or the number of students enrolled in extra-curricular Estonian-language programs be among the criteria used to gauge integration into Estonian society? Since I am focusing on the prerequisite conditions for integration, not on an evaluation of whether integration has taken place, I can partially avoid these questions. However, a discussion of the prerequisites of integration is ultimately linked with conceptions about gauging integration. I contend that a person's ability to speak Estonian or his or her decision to learn the language is a primary indicator of integration.

Despite the challenges of writing on a topic related to integration and education, I believe the Estonian experience with post-communist school reform is an important one to consider. First, education reform in Estonia represents an important example of both the

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2 Joshua A. Fishman, "Minority Mother Tongues in Education," *Prospects*, 14 (1984): 54.

3 Perhaps a substitute term I could have used in this thesis is Russian-speaking non-Estonians, but for the sake of space and readability I have chosen not to.

4 Mati Heidmets, Krista Loogma, Tiia Raudma, Katrin Toomel and Linnar Viik, eds., *Estonian Human Development Report 1998* (Tallinn, 1998), 51. According to the United Nations Development program, an additional goal of integration is to "ensure lasting social stability." Liisa Käärdi and Ellen Valter, "Integrating non-Estonians into Estonians Society: Setting the Course," UNDP (Tallinn, September 1997) http://www.ciesin.ee/undp/integrat/eng.

creative interaction of Russian-speaking and Estonian educators with official language policy at the grassroots level and the government's responsive management of a minority-education policy. Despite decades of Soviet rule, when centralization and mandated changes dominated the educational sphere, the post-communist period in Estonia is marked by local creativity and experimentation among educators and parents. In addition, education reform in Estonia has been an inclusive process. Numerous groups are shaping Estonian education policy: educators, parents, governmental officials, foreign governments, and domestic non-governmental organizations.

Second, the language education debate in Estonia is also important to consider in a comparative perspective. It is telling that Estonia, a former Soviet republic that has received millions of dollars for education reform and one that had interwar experience accommodating non-Estonians, has still had tremendous difficulties overcoming Soviet education practices. The challenges of post-communist education reform are primarily a result of the socially destructive legacy of the Soviet system: a non-Estonian population with few if any Estonian-language skills and a school system that did not emphasize Estonian-language education.

This thesis, which covers the years 1918-2000, is divided into four chapters. The first chapter reviews the interwar history of non-Estonian education with particular emphasis on the diversity of the non-Estonian population, the legislation protecting the right of minority groups to mother tongue instruction, and the inclusion of Estonian language and civics courses in the curricula of non-Estonian schools. In the second chapter, I examine the Soviet period with an emphasis on population shifts, the destruction of all non-Russian minority education, and the lack of attention to Estonian language in the Russian school curriculum. In the second half of chapter two, I consider the debates over language and education in Estonia during the *glasnost* period. In the third chapter, I examine the post-communist reforms in language education with particular attention to varying conceptions of integration, the need for improved Estonian-language programs in Russian schools, resistance to governmental reform, and the lack of material and human resources in Russian schools. In chapter four, I argue that the changes in Estonian-language programs stem primarily from grass-roots efforts and examine experimental language-programs both within and outside the formal school system. I conclude with the findings of this thesis and issues for further research.

CHAPTER 1
The Interwar Period: A New State's Approach to Integration and Minority Education

Debates over the language of instruction, the content of the curriculum, and the structure of schools occur in countries all over the world. These complicated educational issues are tangled up with the broader question, "Who are we as a nation and as a state?" The answer to this question shifts over time and is shaped by the power of majority and minority groups. Ultimately, educational decisions reflect the attitudes and power structures of the day and, by the nature of their long-term impact, affect the realities of the future.

In states that have previous experience with independence, like Estonia, the use of education to integrate minorities in the post-communist period occurs with reference to past systems of education and to previous models of minority accommodation. Although the current educational system in Estonia does not mirror that of the past exactly, the Estonian government has included important elements of the state curriculum from the interwar period into current educational reform. In this chapter, I highlight the features of the interwar educational system that have been incorporated by the Estonian government into the post-communist education system: the right of minority groups to mother-tongue instruction and the development of a curriculum that includes Estonian language, history, civics, and culture courses. In addition to parallels between the educational policies of the Estonian government in the interwar and post-communist periods, it is noteworthy that the Russian-speaking population developed creative education programs in both periods.

Integration

The interwar Estonian government was innovative in recognizing the cultural rights of the minorities that constituted 11.9% of the population in 1934. The Estonian government's position on integration is best articulated by the legislation passed in the early 1920's. In these early years of independence, the mission to protect the cultural rights of minorities was balanced with the task to create a common civic identity among all residents of Estonia. The interwar government achieved some equilibrium between developing ethnic and civic identity with the Language Law of 1918 and the Estonian Constitution of 1920. While the Language Law protected Estonian by declaring it to be the only state language, Estonia's 1920 Constitution provided the legal protection of a minority group's rights to mother-tongue instruction. Articles 12 and 20-23 of the Constitution laid down the basic right of minorities to establish their own schools and to have mother-tongue instruction.[1]

The interwar Estonian government was committed to the preservation of minority languages and cultures through education. In addition to the constitutional protection of minority languages, the rights of minorities were further protected and elaborated by the 1925 Law on National Minorities. This law allowed all minority groups with more than

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[1] Malbone W. Graham, *New Governments of Eastern Europe* (New York: Henry Holt, 1927), 677.

3000 members to establish "cultural self-government...[and to] preserve [their] ethnic identities, and develop cultural and educational institutions."[2] In accordance with this law, once a minority group was granted the status of national minority, a national corporate body was formed to govern the cultural life of the group. This corporate body was funded by both the state government and the taxes collected from minority group members. Although the national corporate body organized the minority schools, the schools were still considered public. The Ministry of Education could, therefore, require that Estonian language and civics courses be part of the minority-school curriculum.[3]

Minority Education

During the interwar period, there were three types of non-Estonian public education: monolingual, bilingual, or trilingual. Interwar instruction was given in one, two, or three of nine different languages (see Table 1). Minority students could receive instruction in their native tongue at the elementary and the secondary level.[4] The diversity of educational opportunities for minority groups in Estonia during the interwar period reflected both the possibility for and protection of minority rights by the government and the creativity and organization of minority groups. There were two primary types of public schools serving minorities during the interwar period: (1) the de jure cultural autonomy schools that were founded as a result of the Law on National Minorities (e.g., German and Jewish schools), and (2) the de facto cultural autonomy school that existed as a result of an ethnic minority's demographic concentration in an area (e.g., Russian and Swedish schools).

The minority schools founded as a result of the Law on National Minorities (the de jure cultural autonomy schools) were the less common means of minority education during the interwar period. Only the German and the Jewish communities applied for official minority status. The Jews and the Germans, which composed 1.5% and 0.4% of the total population of Estonia, respectively, in 1934,[5] were the most urbanized minorities in Estonia.[6] Since these two ethnic groups did not constitute the local majority anywhere, official minority status secured mother-tongue instruction for German and Jewish children.

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2 Statement by Deputy Speaker of the Estonian Parliament, Tunne Kelam, at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 30 June 1993: quoted in Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Human Rights and Democratization in Estonia* (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1993), 4. The interwar government did not explain why the number 3000 was chosen as the minimum number for a minority group to claim minority status.

3 Georg von Rauch, *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence*, trans. Gerald Onn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 140 & 142.

4 The Public Elementary School Law of May 1920 further guaranteed that instruction should occur in the child's mother tongue. Kopl Jokton, *Juutide ajaloost Eestis* (Tartu, 1992), 50

5 *Rahvastiku probleeme*, vol. IV (Tallinn: Riigi Statistika Keskbüroo, 1934), 22.

6 For example, 56% of all the Germans in Estonia lived in the main urban centers of Tallinn and Tartu. Gert von Pistohlkors, "Inversion of Ethnic Group Status in the Baltic Region: Governments and Rural Ethnic Conflicts in Russia's Baltic Provinces and in the Independent States of Estonia and Latvia, 1850-1940," *Roots of Rural Ethnic Mobilization*, ed. David Howell (Dartmouth: New York University Press, 1993), 202.

TABLE 1 Number of Students By Language of Instruction: 1936/37 & 1937/38*

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION	*PRIMARY SCHOOL # OF STUDENTS*	*PERCENTAGE*	*SCHOOL & GYMNASIUM # OF STUDENTS*	*PERCENTAGE*
Monolingual Schools	103 961	98.4	16 019	100
Estonian	94 378	89.4	13 845	86.5
Russian	7 952	7.5	866	5.4
German	940	0.9	1 137	7.1
Swedish	566	0.5	51	0.3
Latvian	88	0.1	33	0.2
Yiddish	20	0.01	--	--
Finnish	17	0.01	--	--
Hebrew	--	--	87	0.5
Bilingual Schools	1 089	1.1	0	0
Estonian-Swedish	444	0.4	--	--
Estonian-Latvian	371	0.4	--	--
Yiddish-Hebrew	160	0.2	--	--
Estonian-Russian	114	0.1	--	--
Trilingual Schools	345	0.3	0	0
Estonian-Russian-Polish	345	0.3	--	--
Total	105 501	99.8	16 019	100

* Figures for the primary school from 1936/37 & for the middle school and gymnasium from 1937/38. Source: Väino Rajangu, "Õppekeel Eesti Vabariigi koolides 1991/92. õa (Haridusstatistika II)," *Haridus*, no. 4 (1992): 11.

After registering for cultural autonomy in November 1925 (Germans) and June 1926 (Jews),[7] the Germans and Jews each opened primary and secondary school systems that were administered by a national cultural council.[8] While these de jure cultural autonomy schools were important centers of native language and culture, not every ethnic German and Jewish student attended these schools; the choices made by Jewish families reflected the placement of their children in a variety of academic institutions. According to statistics from the 1934/35 academic year, 56% of all Jewish students attended an elementary or secondary Jewish school, whereas 17% were enrolled in Estonian schools, 16% in German schools, and 10% in Russian schools.[9]

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7 Karl Aun, "On the Spirit of the Estonian Minorities Law," *Apophoreta Tartuensia* (Stockholm: Eesti Teaduslik Seltsis Rootsis, 1949), 241. After registering for cultural autonomy, the Germans and Jews opened a primary and secondary school system which was administered by a national cultural council.

8 The funding for these cultural and educational pursuits came from different sources. Whereas the Jews self-financed most of their own cultural activity, the Baltic Germans received financial support from the German government. John Hiden and Patrick Salmon, *The Baltic Nations and Europe* (London: Longman, 1991), 47.

9 Anna Verschnik, *Eesti jidiš ja selle uurimise perspektiived: Aulaloeng 10. veebruaril 1998* (Tartu:

The second type of school serving the minority populations in Estonia, the de facto cultural autonomy school, was more common during the interwar period. The Russians, Swedes, Finns, Poles, and Latvians did not apply for minority status; they were already influential in the border districts where they lived and gained de facto cultural autonomy.[10] In short, the pattern of compact settlement allowed minority groups to have instruction in the mother tongue.

The Russians, who were the largest minority group during the interwar period, representing 8.2% of the total population in both 1922 and 1934,[11] benefited from Russian instruction schools because of their compact settlement in northeastern Estonia, southeastern Estonia, and along the shores of Lake Peipsi, where they sometimes greatly outnumbered the Estonians. The cities and towns with the largest Russian population in 1934 were: Kallaste (88%), Mustvee (62.9%), Petseri (40.9%), Narva (29.7%), Võõpsu (25.4%), Mõisaküla (22.3%), and Narva-Jõesuu (22.3%).[12] While 28.8% of the Russians resided in cities and towns and worked as teachers, artisans, traders, and industrialists, the majority of the Russian population, 71.2%, lived in rural areas and worked as farmers.[13]

During the interwar decades, the majority of students attending Russian schools were ethnic Russians, especially at the primary school level. There were also non-ethnic Russian students, like Jews, in the Russian schools, but they constituted only a minority. For example, in 1929, a fifth of the student body was non-Russian and included Estonians who had emigrated from Russia.[14] Only a fraction of a percent of all Russians went to ethnically mixed elementary schools, including Estonian-Russian, Russian-Latvian, and Russian-Estonian-Polish schools (see Table 1). For students of all ethnic backgrounds, there was a strong correlation between the language of instruction and the native tongue of the pupils attending the school.

A Closer Look at Russian Education in Estonia

Several trends in interwar Russian education are important to consider when analyzing post-communist Russian education. At least three common threads can be found between these two periods: (1) the organization of the Russian schools, (2) the efforts of grassroots organizations to expand educational opportunities for Russians, and (3) the importance of Estonian language and civics courses in the curriculum of the Russian schools. These three trends foreshadow the challenge of school reorganization in

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Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 1998): 10.

10 The Information Department of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Baltic States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 38.

11 *Rahvastiku probleeme*, 22.

12 Ibid., 24.

13 Along with the urban-rural divide of the Russian population, there was also a difference in how rooted the Russian minority was in Estonia. For example, the Russian population along Lake Peipsi consisted of Old Believers who came to Estonia during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to maintain their religious beliefs. Rein Ruutsoo, "Vene rahvusvähemuse ja tema identiteedi kujunemine Eesti Vabariigis 1920-1940," *Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised: Humanitaar- ja Sotsiaalteadused*, 45, 2 (1996), 187.

14 Ruutsoo, 94.

the post-communist period, the creative solutions to educational problems and the position taken by the Estonian government towards Estonian-language education.

The reorganization of public education in the interwar period brought significant changes to the Russian schools. Although the privileged status of the Russian school in Estonia ended with the establishment of Estonian independence, Russian schools still benefited from the preexisting material infrastructure (school buildings, textbooks, etc.) and trained teachers.[15] The Estonian government's attempt to expand educational opportunity guided the two most significant changes in Russian education. First, in order to make education more accessible, the Estonian government guaranteed that primary school education (grades one through four) was free.[16] Second, the Estonian government cooperated with Russian educational organizations to expand opportunities for secondary education in Russian. As a result of these efforts, by the 1930s, three Russian gymnasia were open -- two state gymnasia in Tallinn and Narva, and one private gymnasium in Tallinn.[17]

The second distinctive aspect of Russian education during the interwar period was the influential role that grassroots educational organizations played in the expansion of educational opportunities for Russians. The Russian minority was not the only group that benefited from education-oriented non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs also created diverse educational opportunities and alternatives for other minorities. For example, the German and Jewish minorities had significant civic networks that aided in the expansion and refinement of mother-tongue educational opportunities. The activities of the Russian organizations are distinctive, however, since they were concerned with improving education in both the public and private sphere. In contrast, during the post-communist period, the efforts of Russian organizations were directed primarily towards the public sphere.

One of the greatest concerns of the Russian organizations was to reduce illiteracy, which was widespread in the border regions, by expanding educational opportunities. Since only 25%-30% of Russians completed elementary school at the beginning of the interwar period, private societies and educational organizations attempted to expand educational opportunities and provide multiple options for schooling.[18] Throughout the interwar period, Russian organizations attempted to provide education in Russian by founding private schools, organizing private courses, and training teachers for public schools (see Table 2).

Two organizations were instrumental in the creation of alternatives for Russian education: the Russian Education and Charitable Society (founded in 1923) and the

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15 The Information Department of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 193.

16 From 1919/1920 until 1939/1940 at least one hundred elementary Russian schools were functioning in Estonia. At least two Russian schools closed well before the Soviet occupation of Estonia, the Haapsalu keskkool closed in 1927 (p. 105), Pärnu Vene Keskkool closed in 1925 (p. 108). Also, some Russian schools opened in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Many schools opened after the 1934 school reform. For example, the Russian school in Estonia Society's private high school opened in 1934 and the Tartu city Russian high school (1934) (p. 120). Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukogu ja Arhiivide Peavalitus, *Haridusasutused Eestis 1919-1940* (Tallinn, 1989).

17 S. G. Isakov, *Russkie v Estonii: 1918-1940 Istoriko-kul'turnye ocherki* (Tartu: Kompu, 1996), 63.

18 Ruutsoo, 193.

Russian Academic Group (founded in 1921). The Russian Education and Charitable Society helped to organize lectures, classes, and private schools for Russian-speakers,[19] while the Russian Academic Group organized lectures, offered technical courses and founded the Russian Polytechnic Private Institute in Tallinn in 1927. The courses offered at this institute, which included literature, medicine, and art, were subsidized by the Estonian government.[20] Another issue of concern to the Russian intelligentia and teachers in Estonia was the shortage of trained Russian teachers to work at the newly opened Russian schools. While it was possible to take some academic classes in Russian at Tartu University, teacher training for Russian-school teachers was not available. Russian-school teacher training was not available until 1930 when the government founded a Russian department at the Tallinn Pedagogical Institute.[21]

The third change to the Russian education system in Estonia during the interwar era was curricular revision. While the Estonian government recognized the right of minority groups during the interwar period to develop their languages and cultures, the government still attempted to promote loyalty to the Estonian state through the mandatory, national school curriculum. In short, the aim of the interwar Estonian government was to create bilingual minority students. The first curriculum plan, issued in September 1919, reflected the goals of the interwar government; time was allotted to the state language (*riigikeel*), a mandatory course; an Estonian nature, culture and environment class (*kodulugu*); and civics *(kodanikuõpetus*).[22]

The Estonian-related segment of a minority school's curriculum was a crucial element in the government's attempt to prepare minority students for work and life in Estonian society. The attempt to cultivate a civic identity among the minority students is reflected in the 1921 book *Kodanikuõpetus*, written by the Estonian judge Richard Rägo. Rägo maintains that through civics class and especially "through citizen learning the youth are given an elementary understanding of the governing social and state order and a citizen's rights and responsibilities."[23] In the 1928 official curriculum, elementary school students were to have the *kodanikuõpetus* and *kodulugu* class together, three hours a week during the first and second grade, four hours a week in the third grade, one hour a week in the fourth and fifth grade, and two hours a week in the sixth grade.[24] In the revised curriculum of 1938, the hours allotted to the *kodulugu* and *kodanikuõpetus* classes increased. In addition, these two courses were no longer offered together, but taught along with grammar classes (in the students' mother tongue) and history, respectively.[25]

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19 Educational societies like the *Petseri Russian Educational Society*, the *Russian School in Estonia* group, and the *Russian Immigrant Committee* were all members of this umbrella organization. For example, from 1926-1930, the *Russian Education and Charitable Society* organized twenty-six different courses in which 1500 people studied. Ruutsoo, 189-190.

20 Ibid., 191.

21 Ibid., 194.

22 Urve Läänemets, *Hariduse sisu ja õppekavade arengust Eestis (*Tallinn: Jaan Tõnissoni Instituut, 1995), 31 & Silve Vare, "Non-Estonian education and non-Estonian schools in Estonia," Paper from "Multicultural Estonia" conference, Helsinki 26 October 1998, http:/www.einst.ee/society/education.htm.

23 Jaan Tõnisson Instituut, *Kodanikuõpetusest ja õppekavadest* (Tallinn, 1996), 43.

24 Lembit Anderson, *Eesti kooli ajalugu* (Tallinn: Avita, 1995), 169.

25 Ibid., 171.

TABLE 2 Newly Registered Russian Schools During the Interwar Period

	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	PRIVATE SCHOOLS	PRIVATE COURSES	NIGHT COURSES
1919/ 1920	*Petseri Common Modern School-Uhisreaalgumnaasium (in Estonian and Russian) (1919) * Narva II Coeducational Gymnasium (Originally Narva Russian High School)(1919)	*Russian School in Estonia Society's Private Gymnaisum (1920, changes to High School status in 1934) *Tartu Russian Teachers' Union Private Coeducational Gymnasium (1919) *Valga Russian Private Gymnasium (1919, closed in 1932)	*Haapsalu High School courses (1921) *Haapsalu courses for Russian immigrants (1926, closed 1927) *Parnu Russian High School courses (1919, closed 1925) *America Young Men's Christian Association/Russian Immigrant Committee private courses (in Maidla, 1920-1921, in Vaivaras, 1920-1923, and in Narva, 1922-38)	
1924/ 1925		*Tallinn City Russian Coeducational Gymnasium (1923)	*The Russian Teacher's Union of Tallinn's general courses (1924) *Rakvere High School private courses (1925)	*Tallinn K. Eberling Russian High School night courses (1924, closed 1929)
1930/ 1931			*Russian School in Estonia Society's private courses (Rakvere, 1930, ended in 1930)	
1935/ 1936	*Russian High School of the City of Tallinn (1934) *Russian High School of the City of Tartu (1934, became Tartu IV Reaalkool in 1937) *Russian High School of the City of Narva (1934)	*Russian Vocational School of the 'House of the Russian Child' Society (Tallinn, 1935) *Narva Russian Technical School (1936) *Petseri Russian Private Gymnasium (1937) *Russian Private Pro-Gymnasium and Gymnasium of Tallinn (1937, becomes private school in 1939)		

Source: Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukogu ja Arhiivide Peavalitsus. *Haridusasutused Eestis 1919-1940* (Tallinn, 1989), passim, and S.G. Isakov, *Russkie v Estonii: 1918-1940--Istoriko-kul'turnye ocherki* (Tartu: Kompu, 1996), 63.

The Estonian Ministry of Education also emphasized the importance of Estonian-language classes in minority schools. In the Russian schools during the interwar period, Estonian was taught as the mandatory first foreign language. According to the 1930 official curriculum, the purpose of Estonian-language classes was

> to raise citizens who could be useful to the homeland.... By the end of secondary school, students in non-Estonian, general secondary schools should be able to be so far [along in their Estonian-language studies] that it would be possible to express themselves in the state language orally and in writing without difficulty, to be able to understand the spoken language of an educated person, to read Estonian literature, and to continue their education in our homeland's institutions of higher education.[26]

Estonian was introduced to students in the fourth grade with four hours of class each week and continued in the fifth and sixth grades with four hours a week, but then dropped to three hours a week in seventh grade.[27]

In conclusion, an overview of the education of minorities during the interwar period suggest several important parallels with non-Estonian education in the post-communist period. First, the Estonian government made important efforts during both periods to provide legal defense for the minorities' right to mother-tongue instruction. Second, the efforts of grassroots groups were crucial in the expansion of educational opportunities. There are important differences, however, between the interwar and the post-communist period. Perhaps the most significant contrast is in the diversity of non-Estonian educational opportunities during the 1920s and the 1930s. An additional difference is policy-related -- the interwar Ministry of Education never mandated the transfer of instruction in Russian schools to Estonian as it has in the post-communist period. The Ministry of Education, therefore, has had no previous experience with designing or implementing the complete shift of instruction from one language into another. This lack of experience is an important aspect to consider in evaluating the Ministry's current strategies for Russian-school reform.

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26 Läänemets, 60.
27 Ibid., 31.

CHAPTER 2
Integration Undermined: Russian Schools during the Soviet Period

The Soviet occupation of Estonia in 1940 terminated the attempts of the Estonian government to cultivate a civic identity and recognize the right to minority mother-tongue instruction. During the Soviet era, the Soviet government and the Communist Party used formal education as a tool to assimilate Estonians and minority groups in Estonia. Among the goals of the state and party were to teach students to speak Russian fluently, to disseminate Soviet ideals, and to make Estonians and other minorities useful to the interests of the Soviet state. The Soviet school system emphasized the development of Russian skills and knowledge of the Communist party, but downplayed the importance of Estonian-language skills especially in Russian-track schools. In essence, the Russian school during the Soviet period was an important thread in the tapestry of privileges allowing the Russian minority to survive in Estonia without knowing the Estonian language, history, or culture.

In this chapter I focus on the demographic changes and education policies of the Soviet period that complicate post-communist attempts to integrate Estonia's Russian population through education. The population changes in Estonia during the Soviet era had perhaps the most significant impact on post-1991 attempts to integrate Russian-speakers (see Appendix, Table 6). Although a diverse array of ethnic groups existed in the interwar period, during the Soviet period the largest minority group was Russian-speakers -- a group identified not by ethnicity, but by their common native language -- Russian. Russian-speakers included ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarussians, to name just a few of the ethnic groups that spoke Russian as their native language (see Table 3). The Soviet school system contributed to the growth of the Russian-speaking population since the majority of the non-Estonian students who had their schools closed by the Soviets subsequently attended Russian schools where Russian was the only language of instruction. The Finnish minority, which has the greatest percentage of Estonian-speakers among all minority groups (Table 3), was one of the few groups that chose to attend Estonian, not Russian, schools.[1]

In the first half of the chapter, I focus on the radical transformation of Estonia's school system and population from the start of WWII to the beginning of the *glasnost'* period in 1987. In addition, I review the Soviet policies that contributed to the assimilation and Russification of Estonia's minorities. In the second part of the chapter, I concentrate on the dialogue about Russian school reform in the *glasnost'* era. With the onset of *glasnost'* a new period of open and critical discussion of educational problems, priorities, and policies began. These discussions were the beginning of a debate among

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[1] There were also "language dominant" schools during the Soviet period which were elite public schools that emphasized English or French as the language of instruction. These schools did not serve, however, as schools for a particular minority group which spoke one of these languages as a mother tongue.

educators, politicians, and parents about Russian schools that would extend into the post-communist period.

TABLE 3 **Percentages of Estonian- & Russian-Speakers Among Various Ethnic Groups in Estonia in 1989**

	ESTONIAN			RUSSIAN			
ETHNIC GROUP	AS THEIR NATIVE TONGUE	AS THEIR SECOND LANG.	TOTAL	AS THEIR NATIVE TONGUE	AS THEIR SECOND LANG.	TOTAL	NATION. LANG. IS MOTHER TONGUE
ESTONIANS	98.9	0.6	99.5	1.0	33.6	34.6	*
FINNS	40.8	33.3	74.1	28.1	38.9	67.0	31.0
LATVIANS	13.3	21.5	34.8	29.1	42.6	71.7	66.3
JEWS	8.4	26.1	34.5	78.3	13.0	91.3	12.4
GERMANS	7.2	14.7	21.9	56.5	35.5	92.0	*
POLES	8.3	13.2	21.5	63.4	29.0	92.4	*
LITHUAN.	6.5	12.6	19.1	30.2	56.3	86.5	*
RUSSIANS	1.3	13.7	15.0	98.6	1.1	99.7	*
UKRAINIAN.	1.2	6.9	8.1	54.5	39.7	94.2	44.2
TATARS	1.2	6.3	7.5	43.1	51.2	94.3	*
BELARUS.	0.7	6.1	6.8	67.1	29.9	97.0	31.9

Source: *Vestnik Statistiki*, no. 6 (1991), 76. & Väino Rajangu and Mai Meriste, *Estonian Schools Abroad and Educational Institutions For Ethnic Minorities in Estonia* (Tallinn: Kommunaal projekt Ltd., 1996), 16.

Assimilation & Changes in the Formal Education System

During the Soviet era, the educational system in Estonia underwent significant changes in its structure and curriculum. First, changes were made in order to integrate students into Soviet society through assimilation. Second, efforts were made to ensure the Russian school a privileged position in Estonian society. Three policies in particular reflect the special emphasis that the Soviet government and the Communist party placed on the development of the Russian school: the closure of all but the Russian minority schools, the expansion of Russian schools, and the creation of a curriculum for Estonian schools that emphasized the Russian language.

The first and most influential policy affecting minority education in the Soviet period was the Soviet government's closure of all non-Estonian and non-Russian schools in 1940. In place of the diverse educational options offered in both the public and private sphere during the interwar period, a two-track educational system was implemented -- one track with instruction in Estonian and the other track in Russian. Most minority students,

except for the Finns, were channeled into the Russian, not Estonian, schools after the closure of minority schools.[2] Khrushchev's decision in 1958 to allow parents to choose which track school they wanted their child to study further channeled non-Estonians into Russian schools. Many non-Estonian parents decided to place their children in Russian schools because of the employment and educational incentives resulting from a Russian education. The tracking system further led to the Russification of non-Russian minorities in Estonia since it eliminated the possibility of intensively studying any of the minority languages (e.g., Polish, Latvian, Yiddish, or Hebrew) in Russian schools. Furthermore, Russian schools often offered poor quality (if any) Estonian-language courses. Russian education, therefore, cultivated students who spoke primarily Russian and very little Estonian.

The second significant change in the educational system during the Soviet period was the expansion of Russian school networks. During the Soviet period, there was a dramatic increase in the number of students attending Russian schools in Estonia. In the 1936/37 school year, 8,818 students out of 121,520 (7.3% of all secondary students) were instructed in Russian;[3] in 1990/1991, 80,519 students out of 218,801 (36.8% of the total student body) learned in Russian.[4] The increase in the student body was partially connected with the closure of the culturally autonomous schools in 1940. The increase in the number of Russian-instructed students was primarily a result, however, of the burgeoning ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking population in Estonia during the Soviet occupation. During the Soviet period, the largest numbers of immigrants were from Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia; by 1989, the percentage of the eponymous group (Estonians) slipped from 88.1% (1934)[5] to 61.5% (1989), while Eastern Slav immigrants represented 35% of the population in Estonia.[6] As a result of Soviet-era immigration, regions of Estonia that were primarily home to Estonians in the interwar era developed into Russian areas, especially the northeastern industrial cities of Kohtla-Järve, Narva, and Sillamäe. For example, the Russian population of Narva grew from 29% in 1934[7] to 85% in 1989.[8]

These immigration and settlement trends had a significant impact on the development of the Russian schools in Estonia. The number of Russian schools greatly

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2 Although specific statistics are not available about which ethnic groups attended which schools, it appears, from Soviet-era language statistics, that most minority students spoke Russian better than Estonian. This would probably not be the case if these students attended Estonian schools. According to the 1989 language statistics, the majority of all non-Russian and non-Estonian minority groups, except the Finns, claimed to speak Russian as their native language. In 1989, three-fourths of the Finnish community spoke Estonian as either their native or second language. *Vestnik Statistiki*, no. 6 (1991), 76 (see Table 2).

3 The figure for the total number of students in 1936/37 is an estimate made from adding the number of primary school students in 1936/37 to the number of middle school and gymnasium students in 1937/38. Väino Rajangu, "Õppekeel Eesti Vabariigi koolides 1991/92. õa (Haridusstatistika II)," *Haridus*, no. 4 (1992): 11.

4 Eesti Haridusministeerium, "Statistikat," http://www.ee/HM/yldharidus/statistika.htm

5 Riigi Statistika Keskbüroo, *Rahvastiku koostis ja korteriolud* (Tallinn, 1934), 47.

6 Eesti Vabariigi Riiklik Statistikaamet, *Eesti Vabariigi maakondade, linnade ja alevite rahvastik 1989*, v. 1 (Tallinn, 1990), 32.

7 Riiigi Statistika Keskbüroo, *Rahvastiku koostis*, 47.

8 E.V. Riiklik Statistikaamet, *Eesti Vabariigi maakondade*, 32.

increased, especially in urban areas, and as the Russian-speaking population increased, the number of native Estonian-speakers in urban areas decreased. The decline in the number of Estonians subsequently led to the disappearance of an Estonian-language environment. Without a sizable Estonian population in certain regions, there were few opportunities for Estonian instruction from a native Estonian speaker or little practical need for any Estonian skills.

The third significant change in the schooling system during the Soviet era was the revision of the curriculum. Whereas all the public schools during the interwar era more or less shared the same curriculum, after 1944, the Russian and Estonian schools had different programs of study. One of the most significant differences in curricula concerned language requirements.[9] In Estonian schools, particular emphasis and time was dedicated to the study of Russian. By the 1981-82 academic year, total number of hours spent on learning language in all the classes combined in Estonian schools was forty-one hours a week for Russian and sixty-six for Estonian. In the Russian schools, however, the Estonian-language portion of the curricula received scant attention. In Russian schools, the total number of hours (for all the classes combined) dedicated to Estonian language was only sixteen hours a week, while Russian-language classes were allotted seventy-two hours.[10]

Russian-language instruction for Estonian track students was ideologically and financially supported by the state and party. In the late seventies, the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Estonian CP called on teachers to "teach their pupils to love the Russian language"[11] and facilitated this mandate by making additional funds available for Russian instruction in Estonian schools. According to a 1979 ESSR Council of Ministers decree, Russian teachers' salaries were increased and Russian-language classes were divided into smaller parallel sections.

In contrast to the money and effort expended on furthering Russian education in Estonian schools, the all-Union Ministry of Education never required the Russian school students to attain any degree of fluency in Estonian. Mart Rannut, the former director of the Estonian National Language Board in Tallinn, claims that Estonian was not a priority in Russian schools because it was considered by the central government to be a "language with no future."[12] In fact, the Soviet government did not offer Estonian-language teacher training for Russian schools until 1982.[13]

In addition to the lack of government support, there was also little demand for Estonian-language programs in Russian schools.[14] After all, with Russian as the effective

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9 In addition, Estonian schools had more art and music courses than the Russian schools.

10 Toivo U. Raun, *Estonia and the Estonians* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1991), 212. By the end of the 1970s, Estonian kindergartens were being ordered to use Russian for one half of the day. Rein Taagepera, *Return to Independence* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 100.

11 Mart Rannut quoting the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Estonian CP. Rannut , "Beyond Linguistic Policy: The Soviet Union versus Estonia," *ROLIG-papir* no.48 (1991): 47. ERIC, ED 352803.

12 Ibid.

13 Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 183.

14 In an interview with the journalist Maimo Kalmet, an Estonian teacher in a Russian school noted that even in the fall of 1989 one student's parent forbade their child from learning Estonian since

state language, one could easily be educated and find work without knowing Estonian. As a result of these low expectations, weak Estonian-language education programs were not criticized, teachers were hired with no training in teaching Estonian as a foreign language, and the study of Estonian began late in the curriculum.[15] The low quality of Estonian instruction in Russian schools undoubtedly contributed to the situation in 1989 when only 13.7% of the Russians considered themselves fluent in Estonian.[16]

School Reform in the *Glasnost'* Period

When the political and social climate in Estonia changed during the *glasnost'* period, the effects of the two-track education system, especially the lack of Estonian-language skills among Russian school students, became a topic of much criticism. The openness of the Gorbachev period, along with the passage of an Estonian language law in 1989, provided an opportunity to begin debates on language and school reform. The school debate began with a discussion over ways to overcome the lack of Estonian-language skills among Russian students. The conversation focused primarily on methodological approaches to improving Estonian instruction in Russian schools. By 1990, after the declaration that Estonian independence was unbroken by the Soviet occupation, the focus of dialogue about the importance of developing Estonian skills shifted from methodological to political and social issues; the improvement of Russian students' Estonian was crucial for their integration into Estonian society.[17]

The debate on Russian-school education took place primarily in the Estonian press and in the national meetings of Estonian and Russian teachers and school administrators. A review of the education newspaper of the Estonian SSR, *Nõukogude Õpetaja* (*Soviet Teacher*), the education journal, *Nõukogude Kool* (*Soviet School*) and the cultural newspaper, *Sirp ja Vasar* (*Hammer and Sickle*), from 1987, when the discussion of the Russian schools' problems began, until 1991, when Estonian independence was restored, helps to provide an overview of the issues, the reasoning, the development, and the tone of the educational debate during the late Soviet period.[18] Furthermore, the discussion of the Estonian Russian school during the *glasnost'* period introduced the contentious issues and strategies related to language reform that continue to be debated in the post-communist period.[19]

"respectable Russians" did not do that. Maimo Kalmet, "Seekord Narvas," *Õpetajate Leht* (6 January 1990), 1.

15 For some students living in Ida-Virumaa Estonian instruction began as late as the 10th grade. Larissa Vasilchenko, "Vene õppekeelega kool Eestimaal," Unpublished document, 1995, 1.

16 *Estonian Statistical Yearbook 1990* (Tallinn, 1991), 34.

17 The Assembly of Estonian national and local deputies declared on February 2, 1990 that Estonia's independence was unbroken by the Soviet occupation.

18 These three publications have undergone name changes since the *glasnost'* period: the newspaper, *Nõukogude Õpetaja* (*Soviet Teacher*) is now entitled *Õpetajate Leht* (*The Teachers' Newspaper*), the education journal, *Nõukogude Kool* (*Soviet School*) is now *Haridus* (*Education*) and the cultural newspaper, *Sirp ja Vasar* (*Hammer and Sickle*), is now *Sirp*.

19 I rely primarily on newspapers and journals published in Estonian and not in Russian in this essay since the official publications of the Ministry of Education in Estonia, *Nõukogude Õpetaja* and *Nõukogude Kool*, were published only in Estonian and did not have Russian counterparts or translations. Although most of the contributors to the newspapers were Estonian, interviews with Russian teachers and

Estonia's educational reform process can be divided into two phases. In, the first stage, which began in 1987, educators and administrators focused their efforts on dismantling the Soviet Estonian school programs through the removal of ideology-laden courses and mandatory Russian classes. The guiding principle of this phase was "restoration" -- a return to the high standards and successful results of the interwar Estonian educational system.[20]

The second phase of school reform, which began in 1990 and continues into 2000, was the revision of the curriculum and restructuring of the school system. During this phase, the integration of the Russian-speakers and other minorities into Estonian society became an issue. The integration project took on new dimensions at the very end of the Soviet period. Although the Estonian government had dealt with the education and integration of the Russians during the interwar period, the demographic changes and the Soviet-era school reforms posed a much different challenge to educators and politicians. Educational leaders hoped, as the Soviet government had not long before, to utilize education as a tool to transform Estonia's minorities into a group that understood and identified with the Estonian language, culture, and history.

Three primary concerns related to the Russian-speakers' minimal Estonian skills spanned both phases of school reforms: (1) identifying the language problem and the causes of the Estonian-language inadequacies, (2) justifying the reform of Estonian programs and requirements for Russian school students, and (3) proposing solutions. The discussion of the Russian schools began with an identification of the Estonian-language problem of the Russian school network. In 1987, educators and journalists at first only indirectly addressed the Russian schools' inadequate Estonian-language programs. For example, one educator identified the issues in the Russian schools as the "problem of not teaching Estonian as a mother tongue," -- a problem that resulted in only 11.5% of the Russians living in Estonia being proficient in Estonia.[21]

By 1989, the causes of the low-quality Estonian-language programs in Russian schools were elucidated. Väino Rajangu, the Minister of Education and Culture during the *glasnost'* period, wrote "We have not been satisfied with the methodological basis for teaching Estonian as a foreign language, the level of teaching and, naturally, the shortage of teachers."[22] The most commonly identified sources of the inadequate language skills of Russian school students were the Soviet-era textbooks and Estonian-language teachers

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school directors were often included. In addition, I decided to use primarily Estonian-language publications because the discussion of Russian school reform in Estonia during the *glasnost'* era took place primarily in the Estonian press. The main Russian-language newspaper, *Sovetskaya Estoniya* (*Soviet Estonia*), began to publish regular articles concerning the Russian school in Estonia only in 1991, after independence was re-established.

20 Val D. Rust, "Nonequilibrium Theory: Implication for Educational Systems Undergoing Radical Change in Eastern Europe," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, Annapolis, MD., 13-16 March 1992. Dialog, ERIC, ED 346610.

21 This figure is presumably based on the 1979 census results. Merle Krigul, "Eesti keele mitte-emakeelena õpetamise probleeme," *Nõukogude Kool*, 8 (1987), 47- 48.

22 Väino Rajangu, "Keeleseadus ja haridussüsteem," *Sirp ja Vasar* (3 March 1989), 2.

who were not proficient in Estonian.[23] In an article from July 1990, the author argues that

> Up to now these courses [Estonian-language courses] were only given in schools, but often teachers themselves don't have Estonian skills, courses are given...in the absence of proficiency. Experience confirms that [ethnic] Estonian teachers are not placed in Russian schools. Often the school leaders are not even interested in accepting a competent Estonian-language teacher. So it was difficult for the graduating class of the Tallinn Pedagogical Institute's Estonian language for Russian schools [course] to even find a position....[24]

An additional explanation for the lack of Estonian-language skills among Russian-speaking students and educators was that there had been no practical need for such skills. Russian-speakers had been provided with translations of all Estonian documents and in turn expected and relied on them. As a result of these services, few Russian-speaking directors, teachers, and advisors needed to learn Estonian. Eve Annus, a resident in the predominantly Russian-speaking *Mere* (Sea) District of Tallinn, reflected on the accommodation of the Russian school leaders and educators, "For years...the district's education conferences have been predominantly in Russian, especially the director's conclusions."[25] Not all observers, however, found the Russian school leaders and educators' lack of Estonian skills to be a faultless result of accommodation. Maimo Kalmet, a journalist for *Õpetajate Leht*, proposed that the primary reason why the Estonian "language is not learned is...[the Russians'] negative attitude towards our Language Law."[26]

The second concern common to both periods of school reform was finding ways to justify reforming Estonian programs and requirements for Russian school students. During the early years of *glasnost'*, many articles utilized Soviet jargon to articulate the importance of learning Estonian. Journalists appropriated the Soviet arguments used to persuade Estonians to learn Russian in order to advocate the study of Estonian among Russian-speakers. The following is a 1987 example of a "Soviet jargon" argument used to promote Estonian-language learning.

> The basic principles of Lenin (the equality of languages, studying one's mother tongue and the free use of one's mother tongue in the social and cultural life in all the counties) has been spoken of a lot....It should not be forgotten that alongside the general goals, language learning in all fields of study has its own specific goal - internationalist growth, that means it is up to the student...*to learn to understand people from other nations, to make himself understandable to people from other*

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23 Kalmet, 1.

24 Maimo Kalmet, "Keeleseadus ei toimi igas koolis," *Õpetajate Leht* (14 July 1990), 3.

25 Viive Leht, "Tallinna Mererajoon on Narva ja Kohtla-Järve analoog," *Õpetajate Leht* (1 September 1990), 3.

26 Kalmet, "Keeleseadus ei toimi igas koolis," 3.

nations.[27]

A second strategy used to justify the introduction or improvement of Estonian-language programs in Russian schools was the argument of "political and social necessity." The political necessity argument was facilitated by the passage of the Estonian Language Law in January 1989, which made Estonian the state language and mandated that employees whose responsibilities involve frequent contact with the public acquire a certain degree of oral and written Estonian skills. Improving Estonian-language programs would satisfy, therefore, the Russian-speakers' need for better Estonian classes.

The "political and social need" argument appears to have had a positive effect on at least some members of the Russian-speaking population given the testimonies of directors and teachers in the press. For example, the director of the Narva Polytechnic Institute, Sergei Sovetnikov, argued in 1990 that, "It is not possible to live in Estonia without being able...[to speak and know] the language of the land, the literature, the culture, the history. Nobody today can consider this unnecessary."[28] Likewise, in 1990, an Estonian teacher in Narva, in discussing the attitude of her students towards Estonian-language learning, stated "Now children willingly learn Estonian and nobody asks why they need it."[29] These examples of changing attitudes towards Estonian-language programs foreshadow the support for Estonian-language learning among Russian-speaking parents and students in the post-communist period.

The third common concern extending over both periods of school reform was identifying solutions to help remedy the Russian schools' deficient Estonian-language programs. The solutions discussed and acted on during the four-year *glasnost'* period provided a guide for approaching similar issues during the independence period. During the *glasnost'* period, both short- and long-term remedies received attention. Suggestions for bettering the Russian schools' Estonian-language programs fall into two basic categories: (1) the improvement of the teachers' Estonian-language skills, and (2) the replacement of outdated textbooks and the introduction of an Estonian-related curriculum. The most common proposal for improving Estonian classes in Russian schools focused on teacher preparation and placement. Suggestions ranged from long-term in-service training programs for teachers to independent, home-learning programs. Two groups were targeted for training: future teachers in pedagogical institutes, who should "have to learn the Estonian language,"[30] and in-service teachers, who should "complete an Estonian Educational Academy intensive course."[31] There were also more informal language courses, such as the mini-Estonian grammar course offered in *Nõukogude Õpetaja*, which was specifically designed for Russian-school Estonian teachers.[32] To facilitate the training of Estonian teachers for Russian schools, the Minister of Education in 1990, Rein Loik,

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27 Krigul, 47.

28 Sergei Sovetnikov, "Sergei Sovetnikov - Narva Polütehnikumi direktor," *Õpetajate Leht* (8 March 1990), 6.

29 Maimo Kalmet, "Seekord Narvas," 1.

30 Ene Sarv, "Ühtne kool Läänemere ja Peipsi vahel," *Nõukogude Õpetajate* (12 September 1987), 3.

31 Kalmet, "Keeleseadus ei toimi igas koolis," 3.

32 Toom Õunapuu, "Teile, vene koolide uued eesti keele õpetajad!" *Nõukogude Õpetaja* (22 August 1987), 3 - 4.

announced that a teacher's college was to be opened in Narva and that the Tallinn Pedagogical Institute should be expanded to include such programs.[33]

The second proposal to improve Estonian-language programs targeted inadequate Estonian textbooks and the lack of daily Estonian classes in Russian schools. Many educators suggested a program of enhanced study materials combined with a curriculum that required frequent Estonian class meetings. For example, three authors of Estonian textbooks suggested that "in the future the third grade class will be studying Estonian four hours a week" and "a proposal [should] be made to authors to write a new textbook for the third grade."[34] In a similar vein, Sergei Sovetnikov advised making the teaching of the Estonian language, literature, history and culture mandatory in all Russian schools.[35]

In conclusion, the Soviet occupation of Estonia brought an end to the interwar integration efforts. The Soviet school system and curricula, along with the growth of the Russian-speaking population, significantly changed the Russian-speakers' Estonian-language ability and degree of integration in Estonian society compared to the interwar era. With the arrival of *glasnost'* and the passage of the 1989 Estonian language law, however, new opportunities arose to implement Russian education reform. The discussion of the problems of the Russian schools in Estonia explored pivotal issues that would be raised again in the post-communist period, such as the lack of teacher training, the inadequacy of old language texts, and the shortage of trained and competent Estonian-language teachers.

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33 "Haridusminister Rein Loigu sõnavõtt," *Õpetajate Leht* (22 December 1990), 7.

34 Neidi Auli, Valentine Ivin, Liidia Viikman, "Eestikeele õpetamisest ja õpikutest vene õppekeelega koolides," *Õpetajate Leht* (3 February 1990), 2.

35 "Sergei Sovetnikov - Narva Polütehnikumi direktor," *Õpetajate Leht* (8 March 1990), 6.

CHAPTER 3
Integration through Education?
Russian Education in Independent Estonia

In the 1998/99 school year, one out of three elementary and secondary school students in Estonia studied in Russian.[1] The majority of these students speak Russian as their mother tongue and have only minimal Estonian-language skills. A 1998 poll of Russian-speakers in Tallinn revealed that only a quarter speak Estonian.[2] Many groups are involved in an effort to improve the Russian-speakers' Estonian ability, including the Estonian Ministry of Education, the international community, and many non-Estonian and Estonians educators, parents and teachers. Improving Estonian-language programs, however, is a complex task. Although new opportunities for teaching Estonian to Russian-speakers have arisen since 1991, the legacy of inadequate Soviet Estonian-language programs for Russian schools has had an impact on the development of new Estonian classes. Further complicating the implementation of adequate Estonian-language programs are issues that have arisen primarily in the post-communist period: heated debates over how Estonian as a Second Language classes should be organized, when Estonian courses should be introduced, and in which language instruction should take place.

Given the technical problems associated with Estonian-language planning in schools, a crucial question must be addressed: How can Estonian-language education in Russian schools aid in the integration of the Russian-speaking population? In this chapter, I argue that well-organized and well-taught Estonian-language classes can contribute to the integration of Russian-speakers. Estonian-language classes in Russian schools can be an important part of a dual program, similar to that of the interwar period, to cultivate an Estonian civic identity and to maintain ethnic identities. The Law on Secondary and Upper Secondary Education, which requires the transfer of instruction in all upper secondary schools (grades10-12) from Russian to Estonian by 2007 does not, however, facilitate the creation of effective Estonian-language programs. Instead of helping to create better language classes, the Law has primarily inspired criticism of the Ministry of Education and led to increased concerns among educators about the feasibility of such a transfer.

Despite the challenges facing the current educational reform process, most people involved in the debate acknowledge the need for Estonian language and culture programs in the Russian schools. The demand for Estonian-language programs in Russian schools is perhaps one of the most significant features of the education reform process. After all, the Ministry of Education does not need the Law on Secondary and Upper Secondary Schools as an incentive for Russian schools to implement or improve their Estonian-language programs; this process has already begun. Given the demand for Estonian-language programs, I submit that a more flexible approach to improving Russian-speaking students' Estonian skills which takes into consideration the lack of financial and human resources in some areas will help to ensure the integration of students into Estonian society. In this

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1 Eesti Haridusministeerium, "Statistikat," *Uldharidus*, http://www.ee./HM/yldharidus/index.html

2 Tiina Jõgeda, "Kas venelasest saab eestlase?" *Eesti Ekspress* (27 February 1998), A9.

chapter, I explore the role of Estonian-language skills in the post-communist integration process, the development of Russian education, and the criticism and barriers to the implementation of the Law on Secondary and Upper Secondary Education.

Integration & The Need for Estonian Language And Culture Programs

According to the Estonian Ministry of Education, one of the primary goals of post-communist Russian school reform is the integration of Russian-speaking students into Estonian society. To be sure, there are other goals as well, but the integration of Russian-speakers through education is by far the most controversial and popular issue, receiving considerable attention in the press, on television, and at conferences both in Estonia and abroad. In examining the theme of integration, several questions immediately arise: What is meant by the term integration in the post-communist period? What are the differing conceptions and goals of integration? And most importantly for this paper, what role does education play in the integration project?

There appears to be agreement within the Estonian government about what integration means (see definition provided in Introduction). According to the Estonian government, integration is beneficial for both non-Estonians and Estonians. On one hand, integration helps guarantee the individual Russian-speakers a more secure future. Laws, such as the 1993 Law on Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities, exist to ensure that non-Estonian ethnic groups have the opportunity to maintain their language and culture in Estonia. This particular law is designed to protect ethnic minorities, who are

> ...a group of Estonian citizens, who reside on Estonian territory, are in firm and lasting relations with Estonia, differ from Estonians by their ethnic origin, cultural identity, religion or language, who seek to maintain their cultural traditions, religion and language that are fundamental to their sense of national identity.[3]

On the other hand, integration also helps to ensure the survival of the Estonian language and to bring stability to the Estonian state and society. Mati Heidmets submits that an integrated society would be one

> where the fear of Estonians about losing their national identity and the narrowing of their cultural space has dissipated. There is an established and mutually acknowledged principle that non-Estonians will be able to speak two languages and act in two cultures. Non-Estonians do not constitute a separate (and sometimes hostile) community, non-Estonians are adapting (each individual at their own pace) to local Estonian-language and Estonian-oriented society by preserving and developing their own national traits and traditions.[4]

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[3] Vaino Rajangu and Mai Meriste, *Estonian Schools Abroad and Educational Institutions for Ethnic Minorities in Estonia* (Tallinn: Center for Educational Research at Tallinn Technical University, 1996), 6.

[4] Mati Heidmets, "Integration: what and how?" Conference Paper (Tallinn: Estonian Institute, 1998): 1. http://www.einst.ee/society/integration.htm

The government considers the first step in the integration process for Russian-speakers to be improving their Estonian skills. After all, there are three socio-political spheres in which it is crucial to know Estonian: (1) political (e.g., for naturalization or to hold office), (2) educational, and (3) economic. Within the political sphere, language skills are crucial for gaining Estonian citizenship through naturalization. According to the 1995 Law on Citizenship, an applicant must pass a language exam requiring him or her to speak Estonian "at a minimum conversational level."[5] Graduates of Estonian-medium elementary or secondary schools, or those who have completed higher education in Estonian, are exempt from the language exam.

Second, Estonian-language skills also open up greater opportunities for higher education in Estonia. The language of instruction at all the state universities is predominantly Estonian, and the possibilities of studying in Russian (and in Russia unless one is a Russian citizen) are limited. There are two options for Russian-speaking students attending state universities in Estonia -- either they can immediately begin their studies with students who speak Estonian, or, for the first two years, they can study with other Russian-speakers. If the students choose the latter, they will have to enroll in the university's intensive Estonian-language program and, by the end of the second year, they will be required to take all classes in Estonian.[6]

The third sphere in which Estonian skills are beneficial is the economic realm. The current professional environment in Estonia demands that applicants be able to speak Estonian. Many employers rely on the state language exam, which is graded on a scale of A-F (with F being the highest), to evaluate an applicant's level of spoken and written Estonian. The job profile of Russian-speakers attests to the link between Estonian-language skills and job opportunities. In a survey conducted of Russian-speakers in Estonia those who could speak Estonian had better jobs with a higher status.[7] Therefore, even if a Russian-speaking applicant is highly educated and qualified, if he or she can not speak Estonian well, his or her chances for employment are reduced.

Overview of Russian Education

An overview of the post-communist education of Estonia's Russian-speaking population reveals the scope of the Estonian-language-education problem. There are several similarities between Russian education in the Soviet and post-communist periods: the location of the Russian schools in urban and predominantly Russian-speaking neighborhoods, the shortage of qualified Estonian-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teachers, and the assimilating force of Russian schools. These three factors need to be individually addressed since they complicate the implementation of effective Estonian-language programs.

First, Russian education in the post-communist period continues to be an urban phenomenon (see Maps 1 & 2). Of all the basic-school (grades 1-9) students studying at

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5 Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Citizenship Statistics," *Estonia Today* (19 March 1998), http://www.vm.ee/eng/estoday/1998/03cits.html

6 Liudmila Poliakova, "Kuda poiti uchit'sia," *Estoniia* (30 May 1995), 4.

7 David D. Laitin, "National Revival and Competitive Assimilation in Estonia," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 12 (1996), 36.

Russian schools, eighty-one percent are in major urban areas. During the 1997/1998 academic year, the majority of the Russian school pupils were studying in two areas, in Ida-Virumaa, accounting for 45% of all Russian school students, and in Tallinn, where 34% of Russian-speaking students attended school.[8] The Russian-speaking community is concentrated in urban neighborhoods (e.g., Narva, Sillamäe, and Mustamäe [a section of Tallinn]) which are predominantly Russian-speaking and disconnected from the Estonian-language environment.[9] With intermarriage rates low between Russian-speakers and Estonians, the chances are slim that children will hear a native Estonian-speaker in the home or on the streets.[10]

The concentration of Russian-speakers in certain neighborhoods and regions contributes to the isolation of Russian-speakers and the social gap between Estonians and non-Estonians. This division between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking populations is reflected in a comment made by Aarne Rannamäe, the news director of Estonian Television (ETV). Rannamäe observed that "Russians live here [in Estonia] with one face towards Russia, or at least they are isolated in their own society. The isolation only becomes more profound since they can neither speak the language nor want to communicate with Estonians who are their own age."[11] Rannamäe's comment is echoed by a Russian-speaking Latvian student, Aina Blaskova, from Sillamäe, where 60% of the non-Estonians claimed in 1998 to be completely unable to speak Estonia, and 14% claimed to have significant difficulties in speaking Estonian.[12] Blaskova commented "The only place where we can speak in Estonian is in Estonian-language class and as a conversation partner with our Estonian-language teacher."[13]

Second, the turnover of Russian-medium school teachers from the Soviet to the post-communist period has been small. The quality of the staff and its lack of Estonian-language training has significant ramifications for the implementation of Estonian-language programs in the post-communist period. After all, the majority of the Russian school teachers received their training in Russia during the Soviet period and, as a result, they lack Estonian-language skills.[14] In May, 1999, the Language Inspection Board found that one third of Estonian-language teachers in Ida-Virumaa could not speak Estonian.[15] In addition, the majority of teachers of Estonian as a Second Language lack

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8 Eesti Haridusministeerium, "Õpilased," *Üldharidus*, 1 http://www.ee./HM/yldharidus/index.html

9 Natalja Lapikova, "Venekeelsest haridusest Eestis," *Haridus*, no. 2 (1998): 7.

10 Only 4% of Estonians marry non-Estonians. Ole Norgaard, Dan Hindsgaul, Lars Johannsen & Helle Williumsen, eds., *The Baltic States after Independence* (Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK, 1996), 176.

11 Hiie Asser, one of the early activists in Russian school reform, echoes Rannamäe's observation. She claims that Russians, "live in a Russian language information space. In the first place, there are Russian television stations [watched] in the homes. Every year I ask in class if people subscribe to any Russian or Estonian newspapers. It's clear that newspapers are not read even minimally." Herki Kõbas and Villu Päärt, "Vene noored Eestis: ise siin, süda ja mõtted Venemaal," *Postimees* (26 November 1998), 2 (web edition) http://www.postimees.ee/leht/98/11/26/artikkel.htm

12 Eiki Berg and Piret Ehin, "Juurteta migrandist kodanikuks," *Luup*, no. 2 (26 January 1998), 26.

13 Ülo Tikk, "Loobumine kartulikasvatusest keeleõppetalu kasuks," *Õpetajate Leht* (18 June 1999), 9 (web edition) http://greta.cs.ioc.ee/~opleht/Arhiiv/99Jun18/elustenesest.html

14 Natalja Lapikova, "Venekeelsest haridusest Eestis," 9.

15 Ülo Tikk, "Riigikeeleõpetajad on väga vaja," *Õpetajate Leht* (4 June 1999), 2. In addition to the minimal Estonian-language skills of teachers, many Russian school directors especially in the Tallinn and

any pedagogical training. In 1996/97 academic year, only 48.8% of Estonian as a Second Language teachers had pedagogical training.[16]

The third similarity between the Soviet and post-communist education of Russian-speakers is the Russifying force of the Russian schools. The de facto Russification of non-ethnic Russian groups continues in Russian schools where the majority of students are ethnic Russian. In post-communist Estonia, non-Russian Russian-speakers are left with the choice either to continue attending Russian schools or to organize their own schools. Since the foundation of a national school can be costly and challenging, many non-Russian students, except for Finns, remain in the Russian schools, yet do not receive any instruction in their national language or culture.

In contrast to the features of Russian school education that have endured in the post-communist period, four important facets of Russian school education have been transformed since 1991· enrollment figures have decreased, the curriculum has changed, there is increasing disparity in the quality of Estonian-language programs from school to school, and the option of private Russian education has been made available to parents. First, the post-communist period is marked by a continual decrease in the number of students enrolled in Russian schools (Tables 4 & 5). Although more than a third of all students continue to be educated in Russian, the number of students learning in Russian and the number of Russian schools has dropped in the last nine years. From the 1990/1991 until the 1998/1999 academic year, the percentage of children enrolled in Russian schools dropped from 36.8% (80,519) to 29.3% (63,729) (Table 4).[17] During this same interval, the total number of Russian schools remained stable (Table 5).[18]

The decrease in the number of Russian-speaking students reflects the overall drop in the total population of Russian-speakers in Estonia from 1991-1999, especially from 1990-1993, as a result of emigration from Estonia and falling birth rates.[19] The largest group of Russian-speakers, the ethnic Russians, has decreased in size from 474,834 people in 1989 to 409,049 in 1999.[20] It is important to note that the rate of Russian-speaker emigration has significantly decreased since 1994 and most remaining Russian-speakers have apparently decided to live in Estonia permanently. An additional, but minor factor contributing to the decrease in Russian school enrollment is the increase in the number of

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Ida-Virumaa regions do not have the required Estonian-language ability. For example, only ten out of thirty-seven school directors had the required Estonian skills and none of the directors in Narva and Sillamae met the requirements. Lapikova, 9.

16 Lapikova, 9.

17 Estonian Ministry of Education, "Statistikat," *Üldharidus*, http://www.ee./HM/yldharidus/statistika.htm

18 It should be noted, however, that the average number of students enrolled in Russian schools can be much higher than the average number of students enrolled in Estonian schools. Ibid.

19 From 1990 to 1994, approximately 70,000 people emigrated from Estonia. Estonian Institute, "Ethnic Issues in Estonia," October 1995 (Tallinn, Estonia): 5-6. http://www.einst.ee/society/ethnic_issues.htm From 1995 to 1998, however, only 23, 647 people emigrated from Estonia. http://www.vm.ee/eng/today/2000/populationbyethnicity.htm Falling birth rates have also contributed to the decrease in the Russian population. Silvi Vare, "Non-Estonian Education and Non-Estonian Schools in Estonia," http://www.einst.ee/society/neducation.htm, 4.

20 Statistical Office of Estonia, "Ethnic Composition of the Population," 1. http://www.stat.ee/wwwstat/content/1_S_RV_RK/1.html.

Russian-speaking students who attend Estonian schools. Although the total number of Russian-speaking students in Estonian schools remains small, the popular support for Estonian-school placement is high among Russian-speakers.[21] In a 1997 poll of Russian-speaking parents, 67% claimed that they planned to enroll their children in an Estonian first grade.[22]

TABLE 4 Number of Students by Language of Instruction: 1990-2000

ACADEMIC YEAR	ESTONIAN	RUSSIAN
1990/1991	138 288	80 519
1991/1992	137 274	79 691
1992/1993	137 133	73 058
1993/1994	138 996	70 020
1994/1995	142 151	70 224
1995/1996	145 276	69 286
1996/1997	148 316	67 345
1997/1998	151 478	66 023
1998/1999	153 848	63 729
1999/2000	154 747	61 094

Source: Statistical Office of Estonia, *Haridus 1999/2000* (Tallinn, 2000), 64.

TABLE 5 Number of Schools by Language of Instruction: 1990-2000

ACADEMIC YEAR	ESTONIAN	RUSSIAN	MIXED
1990/1991	506	106	29
1991/1992	530	108	28
1992/1993	553	108	30
1993/1994	581	113	30
1994/1995	598	117	26
1995/1996	600	116	26
1996/1997	602	114	23
1997/1998	596	111	23
1998/1999	594	110	18
1999/2000	586	104	16

Source: Statistical Office of Estonia, *Haridus 1999/2000* (Tallinn, 2000), 64.

A second change in Russian education during the post-communist period is the significant alteration in the Russian school curriculum. The Ministry of Education, the body with official responsibility for the definition and implementation of education policy, has reformed the national curriculum in two significant ways in the post-communist period: the Ministry has increased the total number of hours dedicated to Estonian-language study and unified the curricula of the Russian- and Estonian-track schools. The increase in the number of hours allotted to Estonian study in Russian schools began two years before Estonian independence, in 1989, when the expansion in the number of Estonian hours was accompanied by a decrease in the number of hours set aside

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21 According to Ministry of Education statistics, from the 1994/1995 until the 1997/1998 academic year the total number of non-Estonian students in Estonian schools increased from 699 to 795. Jüri Valge, "Eesti keel teise keelena üldhariduskoolis," *Haridus*, no. 4 (1998): 9.

22 Harvet Toots, "Piitsa ja prääniku eesti kooli!" *Sõnumileht* (13 December 1997), 6.

for Russian instruction. During 1989, the following guidelines were released by the Ministry of Education: four hours of Estonian study in the third and fourth grades, three hours in the fifth and sixth grade, and from the seventh grade two hours a week.[23] By 1998, the required number of hours of Estonian-language instruction had increased considerably: six to ten hours a week for first through third grade, twelve to fifteen hours for fourth through ninth grades, and nine hours for tenth through twelfth grades.[24]

The second component of the curricular reform focused on unifying the Russian and Estonian school curricula. The unification procedure began with the gradual introduction of Estonian-related subjects into the Russian schools. In essence, the Estonian government returned to the interwar government's strategy of emphasizing Estonian-language and Estonian-related courses. The introduction of Estonian history in the ninth and tenth grades in Russian schools in 1990/1991 was followed in 1991/1992 with new Estonian literature and geography classes in the Russian upper secondary schools and in 1992/1993 with Estonian civic education classes.[25] By 1996, the Ministry had created a parallel, equal school system, issuing a single, new curriculum for Estonian and Russian track schools.[26] It is important to note the Ministry of Education only mandates 70% of a school's curriculum; the school decides the remaining 30% of the syllabus.[27]

A third important development in the post-communist period is the uneven expansion of Estonian-language programs among Russian schools. Although only few Russian schools had Estonian-language programs during the Soviet period, in the post-communist period, the majority of Russian schools have Estonian-language programs. There is great disparity, however, between the language programs offered in different regions of Estonia. The greatest disparities can be found between the Estonian programs in northeastern Estonian schools and those in Tartu and Tallinn. Statistics from 1997 reflect the differences in the type of Estonian program offered by various Russian schools: 62% of all Russian schools taught Estonian according to government guidelines, 17% of schools offered Estonian from the first grade (according to government

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23 Silvi Vare, "Hariduse osa ühiskonna kujundamisel II," *Haridus*, no. 3 (1999): 11. These requirements were changed in the 1995/1996 school year to begin Estonian instruction for three hours in the second half of second grade when possible and to increase the Estonian class hours from four to five hours in the third and fourth grades. Lapikova, 10.

24 Lapikova, 12.

25 Estonian history class concerns the history of the Estonian state not just the history of the Estonian nation (*eesti rahvas*). To learn more about the civic education classes in Estonia see Jaan Tõnissoni Instituut, *Kodanikuõpetusest ja õppekavadest* (Tallinn, 1996) and Jaan Tõnissoni Instituut, *Ühiskonnaõpetuse tööjuhend XII klassile* (Tallinn, 1996).

26 There are some minor differences between the curriculum of the Russian- and Estonian-track schools. According to the mandatory curriculum, Russian school students are required, beginning in the third grade, to take Estonian as their first foreign language, while the Estonian school students may choose their first foreign language. Also, a new syllabus for public schools in Estonia is issued every two to three years. For example, the next syllabus for Estonian track schools is expected in 1999 and for Russian track schools in 2000. Mai Vöörman, "Õ nagu õpik," *Luup*, no. 25 (14 December 1998), 1. "Eesti Põhi-ja Keskhariduse Riiklik Õppekava," *Riigi Teataja*, no. 65-59 (27 Sept. 1996): 1959 - 2108.

27 Silvia Kera, *Secondary Education in Estonia* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Press, 1996), 51.

regulations, Estonian courses must begin to be taught in the third grade), and 8% of schools taught two subjects in Estonian (e.g., Estonian language and Estonian literature).[28]

The fourth difference between Russian education in the Soviet and the post-communist periods is the reestablishment of private Russian education. Although the majority of Russian-speaking students attend public Russian schools, the growth of the private education sector has significant implications for the integration of Russian-speakers.[29] First, the government will not be able to shape significantly the curricula of the Estonian-language instruction at private schools.[30] Currently, private schools can choose their own language of instruction; the Estonian government has only required private schools to offer Estonian from the third grade.[31] If public Russian upper secondary schools are forced, therefore, in 2007 to shift instruction to Estonian, there may be a significant movement of Russian-speaking students into the private gymnasia where they can continue to be taught in Russian. Mati Hint argues that if there is a massive transfer of Russian students into private gymnasiums then "the integration process is automatically inhibited."[32] Second, since the quality of Estonian instruction in private schools is difficult for the state to control, Russian-speaking students may be offered a substandard level of Estonian instruction. A graduate with inadequate Estonian skills may decide to enroll in a private college or in a higher education institute in the Russian Federation.[33]

Recognizing the Importance of Estonian Language Skills

One of the auspicious policy developments of the post-communist period is the widespread support for the improvement of Estonian-language programs in Russian schools. Three important groups recognize the importance of developing Estonian skills in post-communist Estonia: the Estonian government, the international community, and the majority of Russian-speakers. The Estonian government identifies Estonian-language programs as the foundation of integration programs. The Estonian Ministry of Education states: "Estonian-language learning is key to the integration of non-native Estonians into

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28 L. Vasilchenko, "O problemax i perspektivax russkoiazychnogo obrazovaniia v Estonii," Unpublished paper, Riga, 1998, 3.

29 In the 1997/1998 academic year, only 424 students attended private Russian schools. The four schools that operated that year are Tallinna Eraalgkool "Harmoonia," Vene Erakool "Polüloog," Vene Humanitaarkool, and Haabersti Vene Eragümnaasium." Statistical Office of Estonia, "Üld- ja kutseõppe erakoolid, 1997/1998 õa."

30 State support is given only if the private school adopts the curricula of the state or municipal school system. Peeter Kreitzberg and S. Priimägi, "Educational Transition in Estonia, 1987-1996," in Paul Beresford-Hill, ed., *Education and Privatisation in Eastern Europe and the Baltic Republics* (Triangle Books, UK, 1998), 57.

31 Väino Rajangu and Mai Meriste, *Erakoolid Eestis* (Tallinn, 1994), 80.

32 Liis Arujärv, "Muulaste ümbersünd?" *Luup*, no. 8 (8 April 1996), 12.

33 Anna Khrustaleva, "Uchit'sia za granitsei?" *Estoniia* (13 August 1996), 2.

the economic, social, and political life of Estonia."[34] Integration programs, in turn, are seen as being keys to domestic stability and Estonia's entrance into the European Union.[35] Specifically, the Estonian government submits that improving language skills helps to prepare non-Estonian students for participation in the state's political, educational, and professional environment and to relieve the minorities' feelings of alienation, exclusion, and frustration by opening up educational and professional opportunities.

The international community has demonstrated its support for the Estonian government's integration project by subsidizing and organizing specific education projects.[36] Prominent international groups supporting education programs include the United Nations, the European Union, numerous foreign governments, and non-governmental agencies like Soros's Open Estonia Foundation. An overview of funding for projects related to the teaching of Estonian to non-Estonians reveals that during the years 1993-1997, donor countries allocated 28.75 million kroons (2.05 million US dollars).[37] In 1998 alone, the European Union dedicated through the PHARE program 3.5 million more Estonian kroons (250,000 dollars) to integration-related education programs.[38] Among the projects partially or completely funded by foreign support are the in-service training of Russian teachers, language programs for adults, the development and publication of new Estonian textbooks, and the creation of the Estonian-Language Strategy Center (*Eesti Keelestrateegia Keskus*), which is developing a strategic plan for the organization and financing of programs to teach Estonian to Russian-speakers.[39]

Although the Estonian Ministry of Education and international organizations have integration as the goal of improved Estonian-language courses, the majority of Estonia's

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34 Estonian Ministry of Education, "Estonian Language Training: Policy, Priorities, Programmes and Past Assistance," 4 September 1996 (Tallinn, Estonia), 1.

35 The first official, governmental document about integration, "The Integration of Non-Estonians into Estonian Society: The Principles of National Integration Policy" (1998) reflects both the importance of integration and the need for an organized approach for the integration project. According to the document, "In the changed internal and international situation the Estonian government has identified further measures to be taken on issues concerning the non-Estonian population. These measures should address state and societal interests, the rapid modernization of Estonian society in the framework of Estonia's acceptance into the European Union, the preservation of internal stability and the protection and promotion of Estonian culture. Random practices should be replaced by an official strategy which aims clearly at integrating non-Estonians into Estonian society." Mati Heidmets, "Integration: what and how?" (Tallinn: Estonian Institute, 1998): 1. http://www.einst.ee/society/integration.htm

36 Among the most active governments supporting integration programs in Estonia are Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Israel, Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Estonian Ministry of Education, "Estonian Language Training: Policy, Priorities, Programmes and Past Assistance," Document (4 September 1996): 4-5.

37 Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Linguistic Environment Needs to be Changed," 5.

38 PHARE is an EU program designed to aid in the creation and support of democratic societies in Central and Eastern Europe. In 1998, the Estonian Ministry of Education included 7 million kroons in their budget for integration-related education programs. The PHARE program earmarked 21 million kroons for a similar purpose during the 1998-2000 period. Jüri Valge, "Eesti keel teise keelena üldariduskoolis," *Haridus*, no. 4 (1998): 10.

39 Eesti Haridus Ministeerium, "Koostöö rahvusvaheliste organisatsioonidega," http://www.ee/HM/koostooprojekid/int_org.html.

Russian-speakers focus more on the practical, economic benefits of Estonian-language skills. The decision to learn Estonian is connected with Russian-speakers' attitudes about Estonia, adaptation, and citizenship. A 1994 poll, conducted by the Moscow-based "The Center of Sociological Research for Studying the Situation of Compatriots," revealed that 93% of the Russian-speaking residents in Estonia intend to remain in Estonia, 58% are willing to adapt completely to local traditions and ways of life, and 72% identify themselves with Estonia rather than Russia.[40] In 1997, the International Migration Organization found that 77.4% of all non-Estonians who are not Estonian citizens want to become citizens. Furthermore, 84.2% of this same group of non-Estonians want their children to become Estonian citizens.[41]

According to newspaper and personal interviews, many Russian-speakers conceive of Estonian-language learning as a way to succeed in Estonian society. Members of the younger generations in particular know that in an independent Estonia, the inability to speak the official state language limits their opportunities and jeopardizes a successful future. In a 1997 poll of non-Estonians at Tallinn Technical University students, the most important motivation cited for learning Estonian was to acquire a job.[42] In addition to the work-related reasons for language study, the third most popular reason why students were interested in Estonian-language study was for communication with Estonians.

Regardless of the specific reasons for Estonian-language study, in post-communist Estonia the younger generation of Russian-speakers wants to learn Estonian and recognizes the benefits of improved Estonian skills. For the first time in over fifty years Russians have a personal stake in learning Estonian, the only official language of Estonia. The Russian-speakers' eagerness to learn Estonian in post-communist Estonia is reflected in a 1996 poll showing that 90% of Russian-speaking parents want their children to speak Estonian well or at least sufficiently well.[43] Furthermore, in a 1997 poll of university and middle school students, 91.9% of the students claimed that Estonian-language class was a very important subject in school (*väga tähtis õppeaine*).[44]

The growing recognition especially among the Russian-speakers in the younger generations that Estonian skills are important is notable since Russian-speakers have not always seen the value of Estonian-language skills. As noted in Chapter Two, during the Soviet period, the majority of Russian-speakers who lived in Estonia saw little incentive to learn Estonian; with Russian as the de facto state language, one could easily be educated and find work without knowing Estonian. The recognition among Russian-speakers of the importance of Estonian skills is testimony to the successful creation of an Estonian-language environment that is enforced by language laws.

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40 Kalle Altau, "Estonia's Russians Willing to Integrate, Says Moscow Report," *The Baltic Independent* (21-27 July 1995), 6.

41 Vello Pettai, "Kodakonduspoliitika," Paper presented at the November 1997 Mustvee II Conference, Mustvee, Estonia, 1.

42 24.9% of the students cited work reasons for their interest in acquiring Estonian skills, while 14.6% claimed communication with Estonians was their primary motivation for learning Estonian. Valmar Kokkota, "Mitte-eestlaste lapsed tahavad riigikeelt õppida," *Sõnumileht* (9 September 1997), 21.

43 Open Estonia Foundation, "Estonia's Experiment - The Possibilities to Integrate Non-Citizens Into the Estonian Society," (Tallinn, 1997), http://www.oef.org.ee/integrenglish/two.html

44 Kokkota, 21.

The Ministry of Education & Estonian Language Programs

In addition to the broad consensus about the importance of well-organized and staffed Estonian-language programs, the Ministry of Education, many Estonians, foreign organizations, and many Russian-speakers also agree that the Russian schools are generally failing to enhance non-Estonian students' Estonian skills. There is little agreement, however, between the Estonian government, the Estonians, and Russian-speakers involved in the language reform debate about the best ways to design and develop improved Estonian-language programs. The lack of consensus over policy strategies is partially a consequence of conflicting viewpoints and partially a result of the Ministry of Education's inconsistent strategies for developing Estonian-language programs in Russian schools. Contributing to the Ministry's inconsistency is the lack of continuity in leadership in the Ministry of Education. Since 1991, there has been a turnover of Ministers of Education. In total, seven men have served as Minister of Education, each with a differing position towards the education of non-Estonians.[45]

Despite the inconsistent leadership and strategies of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry's policies toward Estonian-language instruction can be divided into two general phases -- the "bold rhetoric" phase and the "concrete action" phase. The "bold rhetoric" phase spanned 1991 to 1996. During this period, the Ministry of Education made decisions to change radically the nature of Estonian-language education in Russian schools through improving the quality of Estonian instruction, yet the Ministry failed to articulate the ways these radical visions would be implemented.

The Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools (1993), passed during the "bold rhetoric" phase, reflects the impracticality and vagueness of this first period. The Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools (Article 52, #9) requires that all state and municipal upper secondary schools (grades 10-12) use Estonian as the language of instruction by the year 2000. The deadline for the transfer of instruction was extended (in January 1998) to 2007 during the "concrete action" phase. This law does not affect instruction in basic schools (grades 1-9), which may continue in Russian or Estonian.[46] The Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools strives to improve significantly the Estonian-language programs in Russian schools and sets differing goals based on which type of school the student graduates from: (1) basic school (1st-9th grades) graduates should be able to continue their education in Estonian-instruction schools and receive Estonian citizenship; (2) gymnasium (10th-12th grades) graduates should be able to continue their higher education in Estonian; and (3) secondary school (10th -12th grades) graduate should be able to speak Estonian at a high level.[47]

The implementation of the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools requires personnel and texts that do not yet exist and staff compliance that has not yet been secured. The Ministry of Education failed to supply both a blueprint for reform and the

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45 The turnover is a result in part of the change of governments. The seven Ministers of Education and Culture have been Rein Loik (1990-1992, 1996-1997), Peeter Olesk (1992-1995), Peeter Kreitzberg (1995), Paul-Eerik Rummo (1992-1994), Jaak Aaviksoo (1995-1996), Mait Klaasen (1997-1999), and Tõnis Lukas (from 1999). Priit Vare, "Meie ministrid," *Eesti Ekspress* (7 August 1998), A16.

46 *Legal Acts of Estonia (Unofficial Translations from 'Riigi Teatja'), no.* 9 (7 Nov. 1995), 287.

47 Jüri Valge, "Eesti keel teise keelena üldhariduskoolis," *Haridus*, no. 4 (1998): 10.

requisite funds for the transition from Russian to Estonian instruction. Larissa Vasilchenko, a docent at Tartu University, noted that Estonian-language programs "...require government financial support. But, money from the government has yet to appear."[48] In addition to the important practical aspects of the implementation of the law that were overlooked, the law was not placed in the context of a broader plan for the integration of non-Estonians. As a result, it was difficult for both Russian-speakers and Estonians to understand the benefits of the law. As Mati Heidmets has observed, "A lack of vision about an integrated/multicultural Estonia has been an important barrier to shifting towards integration."[49]

The second phase of reform, characterized by a policy of "concrete action," spans the years from 1996 to 2000. During this phase, the Estonian government has increasingly paid more attention to the details of the language education process, including the ways reform will be carried out and consideration of the government's role in the reform process. Unlike the "bold rhetoric" phase, which was distinguished primarily by the passage of legislation without clarification, this second phase is typified by multiple strategies for the implementation and the improvement of Estonian-language instruction. The most popular strategies during this phase have been passing and enforcing legislation, the formation of research groups, and the Ministry's clarification of specific plans for implementation.

The legislation passed during the "concrete action" phase reflects the Ministry of Education's changed approach to language education reform. Two pieces of legislation passed during this phase point to the Ministry's newfound attention to the details and practicality of the reform strategies. First, in 1996, the government passed Law #31, which establishes Estonian-language standards for Russian school teachers. According to this law, Estonian-language teachers in non-Estonian schools should be able to understand Estonian spoken at a normal speed, to communicate in everyday situations, and to write a range of texts.[50] Second, the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools has been modified twice. In January 1998, the Ministry of Education extended the deadline for the implementation of the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools from 2000 to 2007. In April 2000, the Estonian parliament defined an Estonian-language school (which is exactly what the government wanted the Russian Upper Secondary Schools to transform into) as a secondary school with 60% of its curriculum in Estonian. The school can then decide which language to use for the remaining 40% of the curriculum.[51] The Estonian Ministry of Education is using three approaches to improve the quality of Estonian instruction in Russian schools and to enforce this law: (1) the dismissal of teachers who do not have acceptable Estonian-language skills,[52] (2) the retraining of teachers who are already teaching in the Russian schools, and (3) the introduction of well-trained, experienced

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48 Liudmila Poliakova, "Obshchestvo i uchitel': Sotsial'noe partnerstvo," *Estoniia* (2 April 1996), 4.

49 Mati Heidmets, "The Russian Minority: Dilemmas for Estonia," *Trames*, no. 2 (1998): 270.

50 Valge, "Eesti keel teise keelena üldhariduskoolis," 9.

51 Argi Ideon, "Vene koolide sundeestistamine leevenes," *Postimees* (4 April 2000), 1. http://www.postimees.ee/htbin/1art-a?/00/04/05/esi.htmXesimene.

52 "Acceptable" is defined by the Estonian Ministry of Education.

teachers who are officially designated as Estonian-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers for Russian schools.[53]

In addition to the passage of legislation, the second phase is also distinguished by the government's formation of research and strategy groups, and the Ministry's clarification of specific approaches to Estonian-language reform. The formation of formal, governmental research and strategy groups began in 1996, when two groups were formed. One research group, called VERA, was founded by the Estonian government to examine the challenges and possibilities of Russian school reform with an eye to how specific actors (e.g., parents, teachers, pupils, national minority leaders) influenced Russian school life.[54] The second research and strategy group founded in 1996 was the Estonian Language Strategy Center (*Eesti Keelestrateegia Keskus*). The Estonian Language Strategy Center funded by the European Union's PHARE program was founded in order to "develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Estonian-as-a-foreign-language learning in Estonia and enhance co-ordination of current and future language learning efforts."[55] Both VERA and the Language Strategy Center provide research that helps the Ministry of Education create more informed education policies.

The emphasis on developing a concrete strategy for Estonian-language reform and integration is further reflected in the 1998 governmental document, "Integration of Non-Estonians into Estonian Society." This document specifies possible approaches to enhancing Estonian education in Russian schools and states the new direction of the Estonian government towards integration: "The contents of this new move must be the replacement of the hitherto largely spontaneous development by a national strategy that is clearly oriented to the integration of the non-Estonians into Estonian society."[56]

Educational Reform: Resistance & Support

Although advances have been made during the "concrete action" phase of education reform, criticism of the Ministry of Education's approach to language reform remains widespread. At least four different "groups" that shape and contribute to the debate on Estonian-language education have openly denounced the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools: members of the Russian-speaking community; major international organizations; the Russian government; and some interested Estonian educators, politicians, and parents. Although each of these groups has distinct criticisms of the Ministry of Education's approach to Estonian-language reform, they are united in their call for the nullification of the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools.

Estonia's Russian-speakers, especially the ethnic Russians, constitute one crucial "group" that opposes the Ministry of Education's Law on Basic and Upper Secondary

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53 Although these "Official Language Teachers" are assigned to only one school, they are also "responsible for offering technical advice to teachers in neighboring schools." Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "New Official Language Teachers Take Up Posts," *Estonian Review* (20-26 September 1998), 12 (web edition) http://www.vm.ee/eng/review/1998/98092703.htm

54 Vasilchenko, "O problemakh i perspektivakh russkoiazychnogo obrazovaniia v Estonii," 1.

55 Estonian Ministry of Education. "Estonian Language Training: Policy, Priorities, Programmes and Past Assistance," September 4, 1996 (Tallinn, Estonia), 3.

56 Mati Heidmets, Krista Loogma, Tiia Raudma, Katrin Toomel and Linnar Viik, eds., *Estonian Human Development Report 1998* (Tallinn, 1998), 50.

Schools. Although Estonia's Russian-speakers are a diverse group, the recent experiences of many Russian-speakers have been similar. They have been stripped of their Soviet identity, they have found their native language demoted from its former status as state language, and they have become a minority in a small, independent country. The possible replacement of Russian with Estonian at the upper secondary level has confused and scared Russian-speakers who have interpreted this legislation as the state's attempt to assimilate or "Estonianize" them.[57] The Russian-speaking community fears that if Estonian becomes the language of instruction its children will start to speak Russian poorly and they will not understand or identify with Russian culture.

The Estonian government's attempts to change the language of instruction in Russian schools is perceived as an attempt to undermine the cultivation and maintenance of Russian identity. In short, changing the language of instruction is a zero-sum game; if the language of instruction in Russian schools is completely in Estonian, a Russian identity will not be able to flourish, while, for the government, if the language of instruction remains primarily in Russian, the cultivation of an Estonian civic identity is thwarted. In response to the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools, Liudmila Poliakova, a reporter for the Russian-language newspaper *Estoniia*, wrote

> ...to deny one of national self-consciousness, of our own national mentality, to wear the dress of a foreign nationality and with it accept a different value system, world view, foreign system of thinking, a different language, and image of life. What is this? An attempt to erase...memory? What will happen to this youth in the future?[58]

The concerns of the Russian-speakers are articulated by organizations and political parties that claim to represent the general interests of Russian-speakers in Estonia. These organizations have concentrated their education-related activities primarily on proposing legislation and on challenging the laws which have already been passed.[59] Two Russian-oriented parties, the Estonian United People's Party (*Eesti Ühendatud Rahvapartei*) and the Russian Party in Estonia (*Vene Erakond Eestis*), have been especially active in the Estonian-language-Russian school reform debate. The leader of the Estonian parliament's Russian fraction, Sergei Isakov, has been working for the abrogation of the education law since 1993. Isakov disagrees with the Ministry of Education's decision to make the Russian school an analogue of the Estonian school and argues that Estonia's Russian schools students should *continue* to offer Russian history, geography, Russian language, music, and literature. According to Isakov, what should change in Russian schools is the number of hours of Estonian-language learning.[60] Sergei

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[57] Margarita Chernogorova, "Iazik kak instrument ushchemlenia natsional'nogo identiteta," *Estoniia* (22 January 1997), 5.

[58] Liudmila Poliakova, "Pered vyborom," *Estoniia* (26 May 1994), 3.

[59] These organizations' opposition to the education law falls within their much broader program of protest against what they believe to be the Estonian government's infringement on the rights of the Russian-speaking minority. The leader of the Estonia's Russian Party (*Eesti Vene Erakond*), Nikolai Maspanov, however, believes that by the year 2007 Estonia will have two state languages (Estonian and Russian), so this transition to Estonian-only education will not go into effect.

[60] Heikki Talving, "Sergei Ivanov and Sergei Isakov," *Laupäevaleht* (2 May 1998), 7 & Toomas

Ivanov of the *Eesti Ühendatud Rahvapartei* argues that given the concentrated Russian-speaking neighborhoods in Estonia, especially in the northeast, instruction in Estonian is not feasible. Ivanov argues, "This is utopia [the idea] that everyone [in Lasnamäe] will begin to speak Estonian. They won't begin to speak because there aren't the conditions. Even in 10 or 15 years people in Narva will not begin to speak Estonian. It has to be accepted that Russian is spoken in Estonia and the use of Russian should be regulated."[61]

The second "segment" concerned about the implications of the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools includes the major international commissions from the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe (CE), the European Union (EU), and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The international organizations' defense of the Russian-speakers' right to instruction in Russian falls into their general concern that minorities have access to education in their mother tongue. The international interest in protecting mother-tongue education for minorities is reflected in documents like "the European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" in which signatory states like Estonia agree "to provide opportunities for learning minority languages and for receiving instruction in these languages" and "to promote the conditions necessary to preserve and develop the culture and safeguard the identity of national minorities."[62]

Although the OECD and UN have reviewed the Estonian legislation and determined that the Estonian government is not discriminating against the minority groups, members of these commissions have voiced concern over the Estonian government's decision to transfer the language of instruction in Upper Secondary Schools from Russian to Estonian. The international organizations' negative assessment of the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools is crucial for the Estonian government to consider for two reasons. First, these organizations donate a considerable amount of money for education reform projects in Estonia and Estonia has turned to these organizations, especially to the UN and the OSCE, to help develop models of education reform.[63] Second, since Estonia will soon be up for European Union and NATO membership, a more inclusive policy towards the state's minorities will enhance Estonia's application portfolio.

The third critic of the Estonian Ministry's policies towards the Russian schools is the Russian government. Since 1991, Moscow has repeatedly justified involvement in Estonia's school reform debate by accusing the Estonian government of infringing on the rights of ethnic Russians. The Russian government's criticism focuses on the "injustices" of current Russian school reform. For example, at a 1996 press conference with the State

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Mattson, "Venekeelse gümnaasiumihariduse saatus selgub uuel aastal," *Postimees* (18 December 1996), 2.

61 Urmas Paet, "Eesti vana poliitik Ivanov soovib kiiremate integratsiooni," *Postimees* (8 January 1998), 2 (web edition) http://www.postimees.ee/leht/98/01/08/uudised.htm#kolmas.

62 Council of Europe, "Estonia Ratifies the European Convention for the protection of National Minorities," (6 January 1997) http://www.coe.fr/cp/97/2a%2897%29.htm

63 While in the process of preparing the 1992 public school syllabus, members of the Ministry of Education considered the guidelines on school reform drawn-up by the OECD. Viive Ruus, "Eesti üldhariduskooli perspektiivse õppekava üldalused," *Haridus*, no. 5-6 (1993), 2.

Duma, Anatoly Chehhoyev, the Deputy Chairman of the Duma of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Committee, argued,

> The long-term strategy of emasculating and downgrading education in Russian schools in Estonia has already been started. Rigid control is being established over school programs. This retards the development of most pupils. In the absence in Estonia of a Russian cultural autonomy it is difficult to uphold and protect the Russian language, education in the Russian language, Russian national culture. The Estonian authorities do not want to integrate Russians into Estonian society. On the contrary, they want either to assimilate them or drive them out of Estonia.[64]

The government of the Russian Federation has relied on two methods to influence the Russian-school debate in Estonia. The first method, although infrequently used, is the Russian government's use of mutual memorandums with Estonia to influence ethnic policies. For example, in January 1999, the Estonian and Russian government signed a memorandum which, according to and ITAR-TASS correspondent, established that Russia and Estonia "will continuously cooperate and carry out joint work in the sphere of both ethnic policy....[This joint work] safeguards the human rights, and the rights of ethnic minorities in our countries."[65]

The second -- and more commonly used -- method to influence Estonian school policies is similar to that employed by Moscow in response to Estonian-language policies in other spheres -- public criticism and denunciation of state policies, followed by demands for the involvement of international organizations. For example, in response to an Estonian law requiring parliamentary candidates to be tested on their knowledge of Estonian, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesman, said, "We expect these official Estonian resolutions to be appropriately addressed by the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other international bodies."[66] In addition to international denunciations, Moscow has also done some saber rattling, especially in the early 1990s. According to Mark Cichock, Russia made eighteen threats toward Estonia during the years 1993-1995.[67]

The fourth group that is critical of the Ministry of Education's policies are certain Estonian and Russian educators, and members of the Ministry of Education. One of the most vocal critics in this group is Peeter Kreitzberg, a Tartu University pedagogical professor and former Minister of Education, who argues that the Law on Basic & Upper Secondary Schools should be amended or nullified. In Kreitzberg's opinion, the transfer

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64 Official Kremlin International News Broadcast, "Press Conference with State Duma CIS Committee Officials Regarding the Upcoming Election in Estonia and the Position of Russian Speaking People," (27 September 1996), LEXIS-NEXIS, 3

65 Boris Kipkeyev, "Russia, Estonia Sign Ethnic Policy Memorandum," FBIS-SOV-99-020, (20 January 1999), ITAR-TASS World Service.

66 "Russia: Spokesman Criticizes Estonian President Over Language Law," FBIS-SOV-99-014, (14 January 1999), Interfax.

67 Mark Cichock, "Interdependence and Manipulation in the Russian-Baltic Relationship: 1993-1997," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 30 (1999), 98.

of instruction from Russian to Estonian is essentially the "Estonianization" (*eestistamine*) of Russian-speaking students and, furthermore, unrealistic. Kreitzberg asserts that

> No one is able to make clear what the Estonian state or Estonian culture gains with the forcible Estonianization of non-Estonian schools. It is especially strange to imagine that in Narva, where 95% percent of the population is non-Estonian, all the schools will immediately change into Estonian-based [schools] and that one day instead of total Russian language [instruction] everyone will go for Estonian [instruction]. This Estonian would be, by the way, rather interesting to hear.[68]

Natalja Valikova, the Ministry's Inspector of Russian schools, shares Kreitzberg's doubts about the feasibility of exclusively Estonian instruction in the northeastern schools. Valikova asserts, "In my opinion, this [transition to only Estonian instruction] is not possible, not in Narva, not in Kohtla-Järve, not in Sillamäe."[69] In addition to the Estonians and Russians connected with the Ministry of Education, many Estonian-language teachers argue that it is not feasible to have instruction completely in Estonian by 2007. Hiie Asser, the architect of the Estonian-language program at School No. 13 in Tartu, argues, "This model -- nine years in a Russian school and the 'hop' right over to an Estonian school -- is pretty impossible. At least for this generation."[70]

Further Challenges to an Effective Estonian Language Programs

In addition to the opposition groups' objections to the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Education, there are also numerous human and material resource problems complicating the implementation of the law. The two most serious obstacles are (1) the shortage of trained Estonian-as-a-Second-Language Teachers and (2) the dearth of Estonian-language textbooks. Without the necessary human and material resources, there will be little improvement in Estonian-language instruction in Russian schools.

The first and perhaps most crucial problem is the lack of qualified and experienced Estonian-language teachers for Russian schools. Since competent Estonian-language teachers are the cornerstone of Estonian-language programs in the Russian schools, untrained and incapable Estonian-language teachers can jeopardize the effectiveness of any Estonian educational reform. Currently, the teachers of Estonian as a Foreign Language (EFL) are the most poorly qualified teachers in the country. In 1993, only 39.7% of these teachers had pedagogical training and only 5% of the staff teaching Estonian in the Russian schools had professional pedagogical education in EFL.[71] The lack of Estonian skills among Estonian-language teachers was reflected in the results of the Estonian language inspection board's May 1999 review. The board evaluated the Estonian-language ability of two hundred and fifty Estonian-language teachers in

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68 The former Minister of Education, Jaak Aavikso supported the enforcement of the of the law by the year 2000. Peeter Kreitzberg, "Võti peitub eesti keele oskuses," *Postimees* (18 May 1999), 7.

69 Natalja Lapikova, Ministry of Education's Main Inspector of Russian Schools. Interview by author, 17 June 1997, Tallinn, Estonia. Tape recording. Ministry of Education, Tallinn.

70 Made Laas, "Vene laps kakskeelses koolis," *Postimees* (4 January 1997), 5.

71 *Estonian Human Development Report 1995* (Tallinn, 1995), 36.

Ida-Virumaa and found that of the teachers evaluated, fifty-nine had inadequate language skills. As a result of these evaluations, twenty-four teachers will lose their jobs at the schools and the remaining thirty-five will have until the Fall of 1999 to improve their Estonian-language ability.[72]

Large-scale in-service retraining programs are necessary for Russian-school Estonian-language teachers. Retraining is especially needed since there are new requirements for language instruction and new textbooks that often contain completely different material than in Soviet textbooks. In order to reeducate these teachers, the Ministry of Education is relying heavily on domestic non-governmental and international organizations to help organize and fund these retraining programs. For example, the Jaan Tõnison Institute, a non-governmental organization in Estonia, has organized five different "refresher" courses including "The History of the Finno-Ugric and Samoyed Peoples," "The History of the Russian People," and "The New Estonian Textbook Course" for both Russian- and Estonian-track school teachers.[73]

An additional problem is the general shortage of teachers and the difficulties associated with attracting skilled teachers to the regions that are most in need of Estonian teachers. The need for Estonian-language teachers is especially acute given the demands of the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools and the Estonian parliament's amendment to an education law in 1997 that would introduce "state-language teachers" into Russian schools.[74] When the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools was passed in 1993, Estonia only had 50% of the teachers needed to teach Estonian and a shortage of skilled Estonian-speaking teachers in other fields.[75] Given low teacher salaries, however, it is a challenge to attract students to become teachers.[76]

The teacher shortage is most acute in the heavily Russian-speaking areas of northeastern Estonia. In post-communist Estonia, the Russian-speaking areas, which have the greatest need for Estonian-language teachers, are experiencing the most difficulty in attracting and retaining skilled language teachers. Kersti Kaldma, the head of curriculum

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72 Elo Odres, "Umbkeelsed eesti keele õpetajad jäävad tööta," *Postimees* (7 June 1999), 4. One Russian school director explained, "Right now what is most difficult is how to learn Estonian. It's not correct that Russian teachers don't want to. We definitely want to. All the teachers in our school are studying Estonian. How can we demand it of our students, if we can't [speak] ourselves? So, we sit in school from seven o'clock in the evening and study, then we go home and prepare our lessons for the next day." Ibid., 2.

73 "Jaan Tõnissoni Instituudi koolituskeskuse kursused õpetajale" *Õpetajate Leht* (10 September 1999), http://greta.cs.ioc.ee/~opleht/Arhiiv/99Sept10/haridusteave.html

74 A state-language teacher must have a degree in Estonian and a minimum of three years' experience in teaching non-Estonians. "Estonia's Russian Schools to Get 'State Language Teachers," *RFE/RL NEWSline on the web*, 6 November 1997, http://www.rferl.org/newsline/3-cee.htm

75 Kreitzberg and Priimägi, 56.

76 For example, the average monthly wage of a grammar school teacher is only 2000 kroons (about $142 US dollars). In 1993, a teacher's wage in Estonia was only 79.7% of the national average. *Estonian Human Development Report 1995*, 36. Although the Estonian government has attempted to attract Estonian-language teachers to Northeast Estonia with promises of salaries which will be 1.5 times higher than those in other areas, there still has not been an increase in the number of trained teachers in that area. Leivi Sher, "Samoizoliatsiia dvukh iazykovykh obshchnostei -ne put' dlia Estonii," *Estoniia* (26 March 1996), 1.

in the department of elementary and secondary education at the Ministry of Education, claims that "The biggest problem is that we don't have enough teachers who want to...live and teach in the north-eastern part of Estonia -- there are not enough Estonians teaching Estonian to Russian-speakers."[77] For some schools, the shortage of Estonian-language teachers means that an Estonian-language program cannot be offered. For example, in the 1997/1998 school year, 12% of Russian school students did not study Estonian.[78] In Narva, some Estonian classes are reportedly conducted in Russian.[79] Furthermore, in some regions of Estonia, especially in the Ida-Virumaa, English language instruction is better organized than Estonian-language courses.[80]

The second obstacle to designing an effective and extensive Estonian-language program is the lack of textbooks written in Estonian and published in Estonia after 1991. The Estonian textbook deficit complicates the implementation of the joint curricula for Estonian and Russian schools. Furthermore, the lack of essential textbooks reflects poorly on the organization of the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for providing school materials. A brief overview of textbook use indicates the continued reliance on and important function of Soviet era textbooks in Russian. In the 1998/1999 academic year, 35.4% of all the textbooks used in Russian schools were published in Russia, with the rest published in Estonia. During the same school year, the fourth, seventh, and the tenth grades in the Russian schools were the only grades to have the required textbooks. Over fifty percent of the books used in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades are published in Russia.[81]

The replacement of Soviet-era texts with ones published in independent Estonia is a complicated project. First, it is difficult to maintain continuity between the various levels of textbooks within one discipline when there are different authors writing the textbooks. In a poll conducted by the VERA research group in 1997, only 7% of the 12th grade teachers of Estonian were satisfied with the language textbook they used.[82] The complaints most often focused primarily on the lack of continuity between the textbooks for the different classes. Second, there is the lack of consistent funding for the creation of effective textbooks. The current efforts of Estonian textbook authors are perpetually complicated by the uncertainty of financial support. For example, when I interviewed the two authors of *Kodulugu* in October 1995, they were still uncertain about monetary support for their next textbook -- the fourth in a planned series of ten books to span the first through ninth grades. Their first three books had all been funded by foreign sources: the Swedish government, the Soros foundation, and the United States Information Agency (U.S.I.A.).

In conclusion, the Estonian government's attempts to integrate the Russian-speakers in the post-communist period have been complicated by the legacy of

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77 Carrol, 4.

78 Eesti Haridusministeerium, "Õpilased," *Üldharidus*, http://ww.ee/HM/yldharidus/index.html

79 Kersti Kaldma, "Narvast -objektiivselt ja subjektiivselt," *Õpetajate Leht* (17 April 1993), 6.

80 Kadri Valner, "Positiivselt vene koolist," *Sõnumileht* (23 December 1998), 1.

81 The Ministry of Education has given permission, however, to Russian schools to continue to use chemistry, mathematics, Russian literature and physics books which are published in Russia. Laplikova, 10.

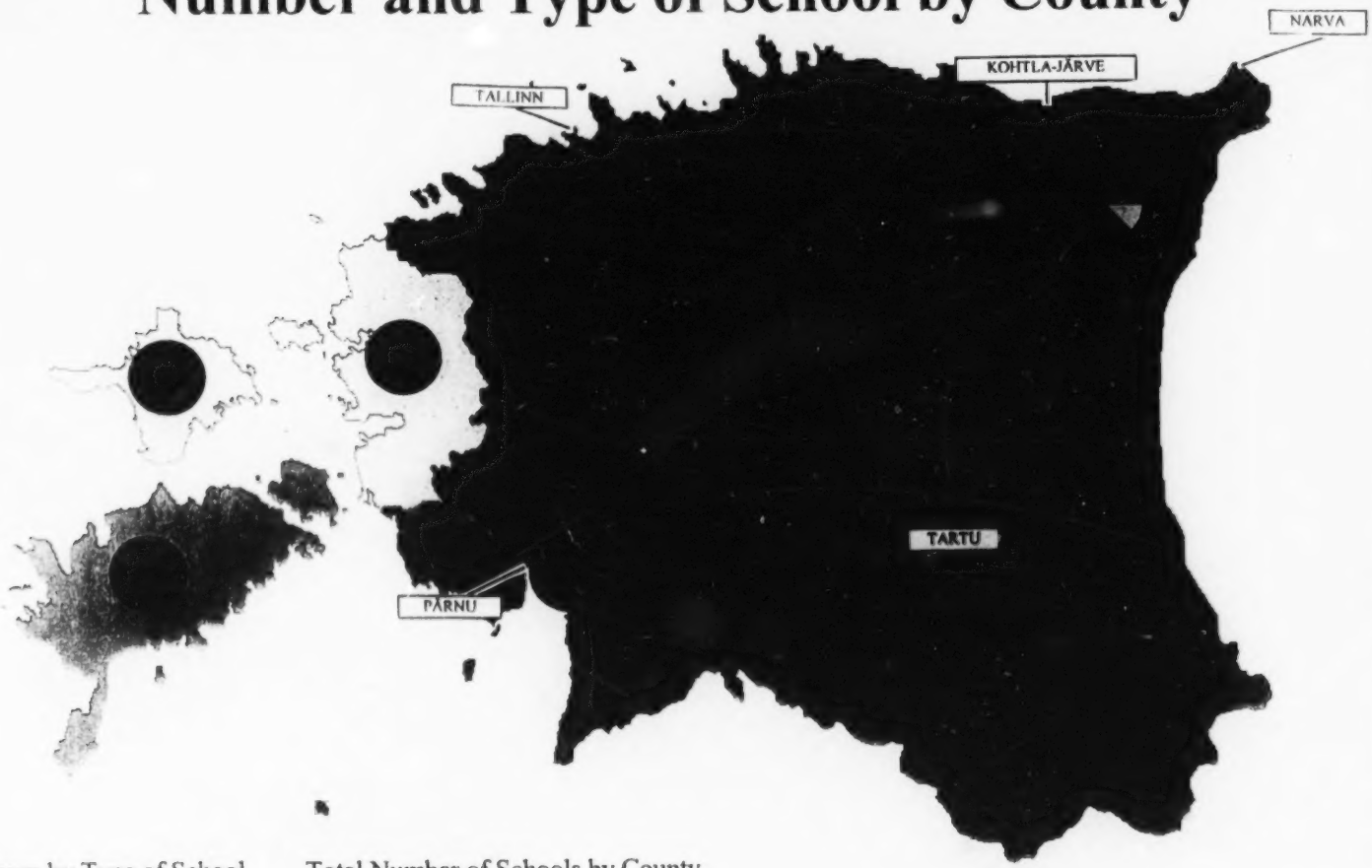
82 Vasilichenko, "O problemakh i perspektivakh russkoiazychnogo obrazovaniia v Estonii," 2.

the Soviet education system and the problematic strategies of the Ministry of Education for language education. At the center of the controversy over the language of instruction has been the Ministry's Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools, which has critics among the government, the international community, Estonians, and Russian-speakers. Of particular concern to these groups is maintaining the Russian-speakers' right to education in Russian while enhancing the Estonian-language programs in Russian schools. Although this goal sounds similar to the Estonian government's interwar strategy of cultivating a civic identity while allowing minority groups the right to maintain their ethnic identity, the scope of this integration project is much greater. Of the many differences between these two periods perhaps the two most important ones are the following: (1) the Russian-speaking population quadrupled in size, and (2) the government has been unable to implement a curriculum that emphasizes the Estonian language and culture because of a lack of trained teachers and adequate textbooks.

A more positive change from the interwar to the post-communist period is the involvement of the international community, which has generously funded the publication of textbooks and the retraining of teachers. In addition, although some members of the ethnic Russian community during the interwar period were creatively involved in the expansion of educational opportunities to Russians, in the post-communist period one can observe the widespread involvement of teachers, school directors, parents, and politicians in the integration project.

Map 1

Number and Type of School by County



Breakdown by Type of School
- Estonian
- Russian
- Estonian/Russian

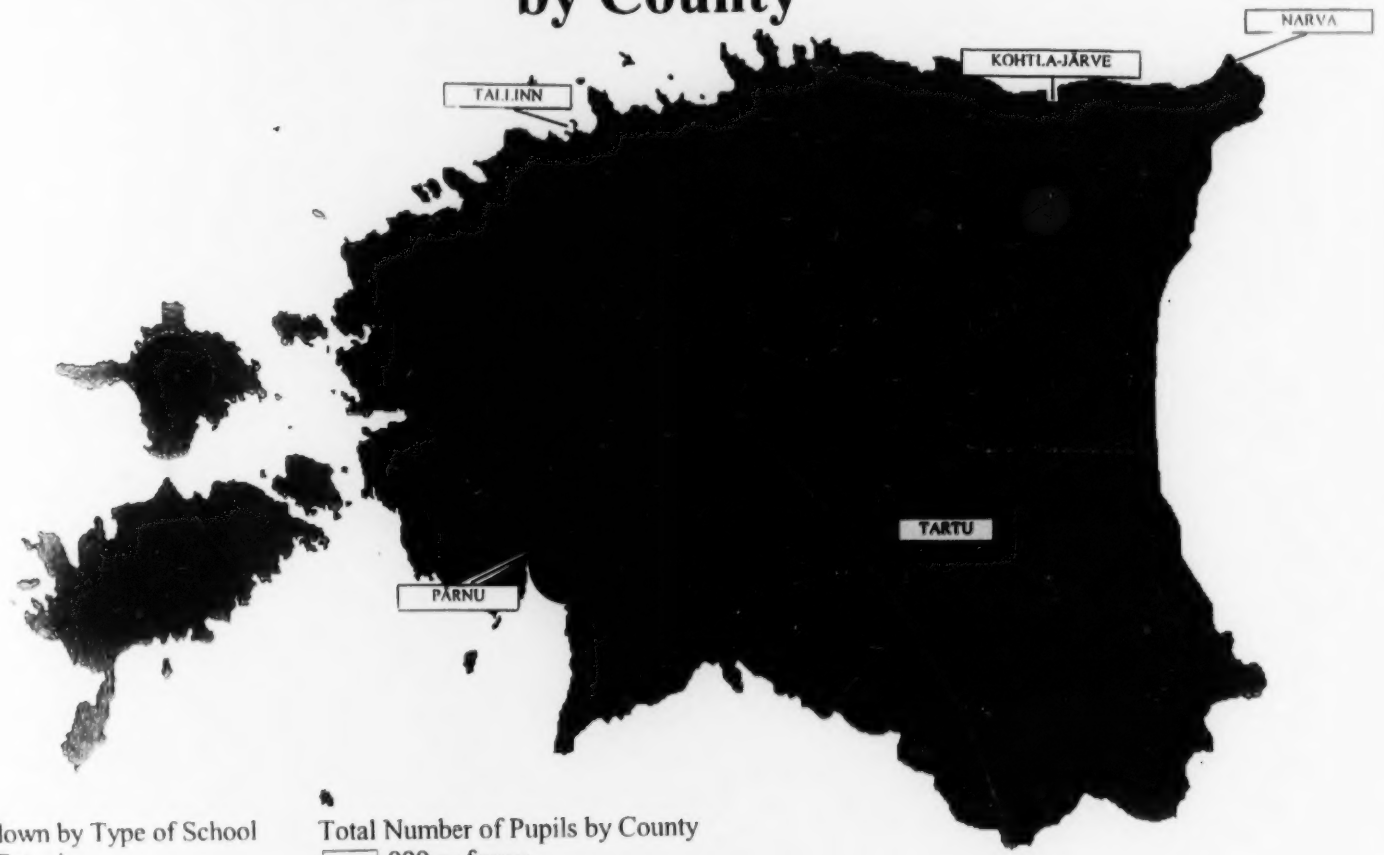
Total Number of Schools by County
- 29 or fewer
- 30 - 59
- 60 - 99
- 100 or more

Source: Statistikaamet, Haridus 1999/2000 (Tallinn, 2000), 64.
Learning to Integrate: The Education of Russian-Speakers in Estonia, 1920-2000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Map 2

Total Number of Pupils and Type of Instruction by County



Breakdown by Type of School
- Estonian
- Russian

Total Number of Pupils by County
- 999 or fewer
- 1,000 - 14,999
- 15,000 - 59,999
- 60,000 or more

Source: Statistikaamet, Haridus 1999/2000 (Tallinn, 2000), 64.
Learning to Integrate: The Education of Russian-Speakers in Estonia, 1920-2000

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CHAPTER 4
Alternative Language Programs: Rethinking Approaches to Educating Russian-Speakers

Although there are many educational debates in post-communist Estonia, there is little disagreement about one issue -- Russian schools are failing to provide students with the necessary skills for life in a society dominated by the Estonian language. Triin Vihalemm, a member of the Sociology Department at Tartu University, argues that "the Russian school does not prepare its students to participate in Estonian society - not through language instruction, civics classes, [or] cultural courses."[1] Despite the consensus on the inadequacy of Estonian-language programs in Russian schools, there remains significant disagreement about the ways to improve these programs. The Ministry of Education's proposal to transfer instruction from Russian to Estonian in all public secondary schools has become a lightning rod in the debate over questions such as the following. Can one strategy of language reform work for all the Russian schools in Estonia? What balance should there be between Russian-language and Estonian-language programs in Russian schools? How will the shift of instruction from Russian to Estonian facilitate the Estonian government's integration plan?

In this chapter, I explore the alternatives to the Ministry's proposal to transfer all instruction to Estonian. There are a number of in-school and extracurricular strategies for improving Estonian-language programs. Specifically, I examine two in-school phenomena: (1) enrolling Russian-speaking students in Estonian schools and (2) gradually improving Estonian programs within the Russian schools. I also consider three extracurricular projects for improving Estonian-language skills: (1) intensive summer or after-school Estonian immersion programs, (2) adult education courses, and (3) the increased involvement of ethnic Estonians in the integration of neighbors and colleagues. Throughout this chapter, I argue that the improvement of Estonian-language skills can be achieved through a plurality of strategies that compensate for regional weaknesses and draw upon regional strengths.

In-School Alternatives

The strategies for improving language instruction within the formal school system are important to consider for three reasons. First, alternative, in-school strategies reach thousands of Russian-speaking students since the majority of these children are enrolled in public schools. Second, in-school strategies are notable for their grassroots origin. The creation of in-school, alternative Estonian-language programs began in the late Soviet period and intensified after the passage of The Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools in 1993.[2] Lastly, in-school alternatives may foreshadow future Estonian-language

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1 Triin Vihalemm, "Vene noorte sotsialiseerumise võimalikud teed: eesti koolis õppivate vene laste näide," Paper presented at the conference "Ethnic Minorities in Estonia -- Their Current Problems and Future," Mustvee, Estonia, 21-22 November 1997. http://www.jogevamv.ee/vihalemm.htm, 1.

2 The law despite the drawbacks I discussed in the last chapter did provide a significant impetus for the discussion about and creation of alternative Estonian-language programs.

education policies. After all, if the Ministry of Education repeals the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools, an in-school modified approach to language improvement may be adopted as official policy. The success and failure of the current in-school strategies will undoubtedly provide the Ministry of Education with rich alternatives to consider for future policies.

In this section, I focus on the alternative strategies for Estonian-language instruction within the formal school system. These in-school alternatives are divided into two general categories based on the school of focus -- Estonian school alternatives and Russian school alternatives. Within each category there are subcategories based on the approach to reform. Although the Russian school subcategories significantly outnumber the Estonian school alternatives, the one in-school alternative within the Estonian school system -- enrollment of the Russian-speaking child in the Estonian school -- is crucial to consider. The enrollment of a Russian-speaking child in an Estonian school reflects the initiative Russian-speaking parents take to find better quality Estonian-language programs for their children.

Estonian School Alternatives

The only significant Estonian in-school alternative for the improvement of a Russian-speaking child's Estonian skills is enrollment in Estonian schools. This alternative is popular among only a small number of Russian-speaking families, but the number of Russian-speaking students enrolled in Estonian schools has increased in the recent past. According to Ministry of Education statistics, from the 1994/1995 to the 1997/1998 academic year, the number of non-Estonian students in Estonian schools increased from 699 to 795.[3] Although only 1 in 25,000 Russian-speaking students are enrolled in Estonian schools, many more Russian-speaking families may be considering this option given the findings of a recent survey. A survey of Russian-speaking parents found that one-third of the Russian-speaking community preferred that their children be educated completely in Estonian.[4] The gap between the actual enrollment of Russian-speakers in Estonian schools and the Russian-speaking parents' support for complete Estonian instruction may reflect the difficulty in some heavily Russian regions of finding an Estonian school in which to enroll Russian-speaking children; in northeastern Estonia, for example, there are few Estonian schools.

The enrollment of Russian-speaking children in Estonian schools has had mixed results. Although a child's ability to speak Estonian usually improves, there are unexpected and undesired psychological and pedagogical effects. The noted negative psychological effects of Estonian school enrollment are connected with the student's ethnic identity: (1) embarrassment over his or her non-Estonian parents, and (2) concealment of his or her Russian origin.[5] Natalja Lapikova, the Estonian Ministry of Education's Inspector of Russian Schools, considers the placement of Russian-speaking children in Estonian schools to be a double-edged sword. She argues,

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3 Jüri Valge, "Eesti keel teise keelena üldhariduskoolis," *Haridus*, no. 4 (1998): 9.

4 Triin Vihalemm, "The Adaptation of Non-Estonians Into the Estonian Society 1992-1993. Factors Influencing the Adaptive Process," (Master's thesis, Tartu University, 1993), 71.

5 Ülo Tikk, "Üksikjuhtumit pole mõtet üldistada," *Õpetajate Leht* (19 Jan. 1996). (Web edition)

> On one hand, it's good when a child is placed into an Estonian environment - this helps with the acquisition of language. On the other hand, there is also a danger hidden in this [the placement of Russian-speaking children in Estonian schools]: the child is put under pressure. At home he is a Russian, at school he has to behave as an Estonian. This is how a child becomes a split person.[6]

The enrollment of Russian-speaking students in Estonian schools also has negative pedagogical effects on Estonian students. Numerous Estonian teachers have noted that they are forced to simplify the level of Estonian in which they taught, so that Russian-speaking children could understand what was being taught in class.[7] Although the Russian-speaking student may be able to learn more quickly and more comprehensively in a native language environment, the lower level of Estonian used in the classroom does a disservice to the native Estonian-speaking students in the class who are prepared for more advanced Estonian instruction.

Russian In-school Alternatives

The second category of in-school alternatives focuses on the enhancement of Estonian-language instruction within Russian schools. The main objective of most of these alternative programs is to educate Russian-speaking students about Estonian culture, history, and language, but to retain a Russian-language instruction base. The Russian school strategies are significant to consider for three primary reasons: (1) the widespread support within the Russian-speaking community for Estonian classes, (2) the creativity of the designers of these language programs, and (3) the impact of these programs on the students and policy.

The first issue to consider is the widespread support at the grassroots level for Estonian-language programs in Russian schools. Both the majority of Russian-speaking families and the Estonians who oppose the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools endorse the strategy of improving Estonian-language skills in the Russian schools. Russian-speaking parents hope to create more educational opportunities for their sons and daughters through improved language programs. Parents and students recognize that greater opportunities for education and employment are connected with Estonian-language skills. In-school Estonian-language programs are also appealing to many Russian-speakers since they do not threaten the school's Russian cultural environment. Russian schools can offer strong Estonian-language programs and still celebrate Russian holidays and offer Russian language courses.

Russian in-school strategies also have strong backing from many Estonian politicians and educators.[8] Estonians who are committed to a viable and effective Estonian-language program in Russian schools have both significantly contributed to the design of alternative programs and also publicly supported such developments. For

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6 Mai Vöörman, "Vene koolis sinilindu püüdmas," *Luup*, no. 23 (16 November 1998), 1 (web edition) http://postimees.ee/luup/98/23

7 Liis Arujärv, "Muulaste ümbersünd?" *Luup*, 8 April 1996, 10. & Herki Kõbas, "Eri rahvustest laste õppimine ühes klassis tekitab pingeid," *Postimees* (29 April 1998), 3.

8 Mall Jõgi, "Keelepoliitika on poliitikutele ebamugav," *Kultuurileht* (4 Oct. 1996), 4.

example, Peeter Kreitzberg, who presented the Center Party's *(Keskerakond)* proposal for Russian school reform in 1999, suggested that "we should guarantee that by the year 2007 all graduates of non-Estonian schools have sufficient Estonian-language abilities so that all those who want to, and we underline want, would be able to study in an Estonian gymnasium."[9]

The second significant benefit of the Russian in-school alternatives is the active grassroots involvement in Estonian-language programs; creative parents and educators have designed and implemented many alternative programs. Estonia's Russian-speaking community has become significantly more self-reliant and creative concerning the language education of their children since Estonia regained its independence in 1991. The Russian-speaking parents, although lacking national or local organization (e.g., there is no Tartu Parent-Teacher Association), have had much success in implementing change in many Russian schools. For example, the Russian-speaking parents at two of the five Russian schools in Tartu changed the school's curriculum through their demand that Estonian be taught from the first grade, instead of the third. Educators have also become more creative. Despite fifty years of subservience to the Central Ministry of Education in Moscow and working within a system that did not encourage alternative or innovative ideas, Russian school educators have discovered a variety of new ways to strengthen Estonian language and culture programs in Russian schools.

The third benefit of in-school language programs is the positive effect of such classes on students and future education policy. In short, the alternative programs have multiple immediate benefits, but few drawbacks. If the Estonian government decides to follow through with its decision to switch the language of instruction from Russian to Estonian in Russian schools by the year 2007, then the children who are receiving this Estonian-language training will have more language skills than if they began learning Estonian at a later age. If the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools is not enforced, then the current alternative programs may be officially endorsed by the Ministry of Education and introduced in other regions.

The Development of an Alternative Estonian Program in Russian Schools

The creation of an effective alternative Estonian-language and culture program for Russian-speaking students is a challenging and complicated process. Since the Estonian skills of the Russian-speaking students vary regionally, the curriculum must vary accordingly. Estonia's Russian-speaking population can be divided into three regional categories: rural and island Russian-speakers, where they constitute a small minority of the population; urban populations (like in Tallinn, Tartu, or Pärnu) where they represent 15-50% of the city's inhabitants; and urban populations in mostly 'Russian' cities (like in Kohtla-Järve, Sillamäe, and Narva) where Russian-speakers are 60% or more of the total city population. The second factor complicating the creation of an effective alternative language program is the regional variation of human and material resources. Some regions in Estonia, like Tartu, are rich with resources (e.g., schools have access to university resources and faculty), while other areas, like Narva, are more impoverished (e.g., they have a shortage of qualified teachers) in the educational sphere.

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9 Peeter Kreitzberg, "Võti peitub eesti keele oskuses," *Postimees* (18 May 1999), 7.

At least three carefully tailored language-reform programs that are shaped by regional possibilities and limitations have been developed in the post-communist period: (1) the immersion model, (2) the intensive mixed, and (3) the soft approach. The immersion model, which places Russian-speaking students side-by-side with Estonians, is being used out of necessity in rural areas where there are few Russian-speakers and by choice in larger cities. Although the immersion model initially appears similar to the strategy of enrolling Russian-speaking children in Estonian schools (the in-school Estonian strategy), there are two important differences between these programs. First, in the immersion model the Russian-speaking students avoid the ethnic isolation that usually results from enrolling individually. As a result of the immersion strategy to enroll a complete Russian class in an Estonian school, the Russian-speaking students are not a minority within a predominantly Estonian classroom setting. Second, the immersion program offers more opportunities for teacher preparation than the strategy of individual enrollment. Schools involved in the immersion program prepare Estonian teachers for the specific challenges and needs of Russian-speaking students; teachers are focused on the unique needs of Russian-speaking students. When a child enrolls individually in an Estonian class, the teacher may not be trained to respond to the unique language needs of a Russian-speaking student.

The immersion model is currently being tested in Tallinn's 13th Middle School, where a whole 10th grade class of Russian students is studying with Estonian pupils. The idea for this "immersion" program stemmed from the grassroots, creative efforts of school teachers. The Pedagogical Collective, a group of Estonian and Russian teachers who noticed that the Russian-speaking students attending their after-school Estonian-language courses showed a genuine interest in the language created the 13th Middle School immersion program. In response to the students' enthusiasm, the Collective decided to allot another 10th grade class for the Russian students in the Estonian school. The popularity of the program was evident after one year in existence. In 1997, over one hundred students from all over Northern Estonia vied for thirty-five spots.[10]

Since the success of the immersion model relies on Russian-speaking students who already have advanced Estonian skills and the cooperation of nearby Estonian schools, it has limited applicability in Estonia. The immersion model is especially hard to recreate in areas that have a Russian-speaking majority due to the lack of Estonian schools. For example, an experimental immersion program in the Järve Gymnasium in Kohtla-Järve, initiated in 1991, did not succeed. According to the director of the gymnasium, the immersion project failed because the Russian children continued to speak Russian among themselves and the teachers were stressed by the different temperaments of the students.[11]

Despite the problems of the Kohtla-Järve program and the challenge of implementing this program in predominantly Russian-speaking regions, the immersion program continues to run in other areas where the Russian-speaking population is clustered. In Lasnamäe (Tallinn), for example, two schools, the Estonian Gymnasium and Laagna Gymnasium, are hosting Russian classes.[12] The success or failure of the

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10 Liudmila Poliakova, "Russkii klass v Estonskoi shkole," *Estoniia* (30 April 1996), 5.

11 Köbas, 3.

12 Svetlana Krishchiunas, "Russkii klass v estonskoi gimnazii," *Estoniia* (31 January 1997), 7 &

immersion program deserves special attention since it replicates what the Estonian Ministry of Education and Culture wants to accomplish by 2007, namely that instruction is completely in Estonian. An important difference between the immersion model and the plans of the Ministry of Education is that the participants in these immersion experiments have willingly chosen to participate in the program and they are motivated to learn Estonian.

The second Russian in-school program is the intensive-mixed program, which incorporates rigorous Estonian classes into the curriculum of the Russian school. This model utilizes intensive literature, history, culture, and language classes to educate the Russian-speaking students about Estonia and to prepare them for higher education in Estonian. The intensive-mixed program begins in the either kindergarten or the first grade with basic courses in language and culture. In part, the early introduction of Estonian classes in the intensive-mixed program is designed in response to the demands of Russian-speaking parents; many of these parents are so eager for their children to learn Estonian by kindergarten or the first grade that they are willing to pay for additional Estonian classes in the Russian schools.[13] As the student progresses to higher grades in the intensive-mixed program, the number of courses taught in Estonian increases and the student can decide which subjects he or she would like to take in Estonian. By graduation time, the students should be able to pass the state language exam.

One of the most well developed mixed intensive programs is at the 13th Russian School in Tartu; it has been offering an intensive Estonian-language program since 1991.[14] By 1997, the Russian-speaking students in six classes had 60% of their courses taught in Russian and 40% in Estonian.[15] Due to the instructional split between Russian and Estonian, teachers label the 13th school as *kakskeelne* or a dual-language school -- the type of school many teachers think will be the future model for most Russian schools in Estonia. The goal of the intensive program at the 13th School is to help "raise an all-around informed person and someone who can manage in society."[16] This objective is achieved through not only Estonian-language classes, but also through civics, Estonian literature, and history classes.

The primary benefit of the intensive-mixed model is that Russian-speaking students receive a basic and upper secondary education in both Estonian and Russian, which allows them to continue their studies at the university level without sacrificing their Russian cultural education. Leino Lepp, a teacher at a Tallinn school that is starting to develop an intensive Estonian program, echoes the importance of maintaining the Russian instruction.

Krishchiunas, "Russkii klass v estonskoi shkole," *Estoniia* (9 November 1996), 3.

13 The Tallinn Kindergarten No. 17 has an Estonian-language program for its students. Marika Merila, "Estonskii iazyk v detskom sadu," *Estoniia* (24 January 1997), 5. Estonian-language classes have even been offered as early as the kindergarten level in response to parents' wishes. In Mustamäe some parents are paying 60 kroons a month for extra Estonian lessons for their children. Kerttu Soans, "Vene lapsed tahavad eesti keelt õppida," *Sõnumileht* (2 Nov. 1996), 6.

14 Soans, 5.

15 Made Laas, "Vene laps kakskeelses koolis," *Postimees* (4 January 1997), 5.

16 Jevgenia Lindevaldti, "Tartu 13. Keskkool täna," *Haridus*, no. 1 (1996): 53.

One's "mother tongue...should be the basis of all education."[17] One drawback of the intensive-mixed program, however, is that it depends on close ties with nearby universities for professional Estonian teachers. Therefore, the program can not be easily implemented in many areas of the country and is limited to university cities.

The third alternative language program is the soft-mixed model; in this program Estonian language and culture classes are introduced into the curriculum at a gradual pace. The soft-mixed approach is especially useful in the northeastern areas of Estonia, where the lack of an Estonian-language environment and the shortage of Estonian teachers limits the possibilities for a more intensive immersion program. The model is well-suited for a city like Narva, where there is an acute shortage of trained teachers. In 1995, ninety-one out of ninety-six Estonian-language teachers (twenty-three of whom were Estonian) had received their higher education in the Russian Federation and none of the teachers were trained Estonian philologists.[18] The goals of the soft-mixed program are to build the students' Estonian vocabulary slowly, to help them develop a strong Estonian grammar base, and to familiarize the students with Estonian culture. As with the intensive-mixed model, Estonian textbooks play an important role in introducing students to geography, history, and other subjects specifically related to Estonia. Another common feature of the soft-mixed and intensive-mixed programs is that all the textbooks regarding Russian language, literature, and culture remain in Russian. In short, Russian culture is preserved and protected. Out-of-school language programs, such as summer language camps or Estonian readings groups, also play an important role in the soft-mixed model.

There are few areas in Estonia, outside the northeast region, where this model, which is less intensive than the other two models, needs to be applied. Yet given the economic restrictions and lack of human resources in the northeast, the soft-mixed model is currently the most suitable for the region. A variation of the soft-mixed model is currently used at the Narva Pjahklimjae/Pähklimäe Gymnasium. At this school, students begin to learn Estonian gradually from the first grade and also have the opportunity to take mathematics class in Estonian. In addition to these subjects, students may participate in a student exchange program with a gymnasium in Saaremaa, where students can learn Estonian better and "experience life on the island."[19] The success of the soft-mixed language program is critical and should be closely monitored, especially considering the social and linguistic division between the northeast and the rest of Estonia.

Extracurricular Language Education Opportunities

In addition to the possibilities for improving Estonian-language programs within the formal school system, there are also extracurricular opportunities for language improvement. At least three out-of-school Estonian-language opportunities for Russian-speakers currently exist: (1) after-school, weekend, and summer language camps;

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17 Imbi Paju, "Ärkamisaegsed meeleolud vene koolis," *Sõnumileht* (23 October 1996), 12.

18 Ülo Tikk, "Aasti 2000 kummitab vene gümnaasiumide kohal," *Õpetajate Leht* (15 December 1995), 5 & Larissa Vasilchenko,"Vene õppekeelega kool Eestimaal." Unpublished material, 1995.

19 Narva Pjahklimjae Gymnasium homepage, http://www.ida-virumaa.ee/koolid/pahklimae/english.html & ECMI Baltic Seminar 1998 participants, "Integration of Non-Estonians into Estonian Society," based on data from the Estonian Ministry of Education, 48.

(2) adult education classes; and (3) informal contact with native Estonian speakers at work or in the neighborhood. Although the extracurricular language programs involve only a fraction of the Russian-speaking students serviced by in-school alternative language programs, they are important to review for two primary reasons. First, the out-of-school Estonian programs play an important role in both the reinforcement of language skills learned in school and the introduction of spoken Estonian to Russian-speakers. Second, extracurricular programs provide an opportunity for Russian-speakers to interact with native Estonian speakers and to practice colloquial skills.

Of the three extracurricular programs for language enhancement, the after-school, weekend, and summer language programs are the most popular. These out-of-school language programs exist to supplement, not to act as a substitute for the more formal in-school language programs. The discussion and creation of extracurricular programs has accelerated after the extension of the deadline for the transition to Estonian instruction in 1997. Several international organizations have also become interested in the funding of after-school and summer language camps, as a result of the important role they could play in integration and language learning.[20] After-school and summer programs are especially popular among the northeastern Russian schools, several of which have already cultivated relationships with rural Estonian communities.[21] One such summer language program (*suvekeelelaager*) for Sillamäe Oldtown School no. 9 students was held at a farm in Kadrina. Kristi Tamm, an Estonian-language teacher in Sillamäe, explained the important role of the Kadrina farm experience in her students' language education: "These children are ninth grade students at the Sillamäe Oldtown School no. 9, who are preparing for their final basic school Estonian as a state language exam....They want to continue to study at Estonian high schools and wanted extra education."[22]

In addition to the summer language camps, Saturday language programs (*laupäevagümnaasium*) are also becoming a popular method of Estonian education. The benefit of Saturday programs is that they are usually held in a convenient location and are inexpensive to attend. Moreover, the weekend programs also introduce Russian-speaking children to Estonian society through visits to nearby Estonian communities and monuments. One such weekend program is organized in the Mustvee Russian school, which has had a Saturday Estonian-language program running for over five years. Students, in return for a 300-kroon annual fee, receive four hours of language experience every weekend and guided field trips around Estonia.[23]

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20 The European Union funded PHARE program donated 50,000 kroons to support fifty 10-17-year-old children from Narva to attend a language camp on Saaremaa. Marko Mägi, "Narvlased kaebavad Leisi keelelaagri olme üle," *Postimees* (10 July 1999), 5 (web edition). http://www.postimees.ee/leht/99/07/10/uudised.shtm

21 For example, Gennadi Bessan, the director of the Kohtla-Järve Vahtra Basic School, recommended in a 1998 interview that language camps (*keeleõppe-laagrid*) be organized in areas where there are few residents of ethnic Russian origin. "Aasta 2007 pole enam mägede taga," *Haridus*, no. 5 (1998): 4-7.

22 Ülo Tikk, "Loobumine kartulikasvatusest keeleõppetalu kasuks," *Õpetajate Leht* (18 June 1999), 8 (web edition) http://greta.cs.ioc.ee/~opleht/Arhiiv/99Jun18/elustenesest.html

23 Raimu Hanson, "Mustvee vene lapsed õpivad innukalt eesti keelt," *Postimees - Jõgevamaa* (insert) (13 May 1994), 7.

Adult Estonian education classes are the second type of extracurricular program designed to strengthen Estonian-language skills. Although all of the previous in-school and out-of-school alternative language programs have focused on improving the language skills of children, adult education programs that "promote the retention, rejuvenation, or reinforcement of language skills" are especially important in the creation of a home environment supportive of Estonian-language education.[24] The creation of adult distance education programs that rely on radio, television, and computers have become particularly popular in the last two years. Two important events affecting the development of adult distance education for Russian-speakers occurred in September 1998. First, Andra Veidemann, the Minister without Portfolio in Charge of Inter-Ethnic Relations, suggested the funding of Estonian-language radio and television programs to benefit the residents of cities in Ida-Virumaa who do not live in an Estonian linguistic environment.[25] Second, the Tartu University's Open University created an Internet-based Estonian-language course specifically targeted to residents of Ida-Virumaaa.[26]

The last type of out-of-school language enhancement program is a public service campaign. The goal of such a public and commercial campaign is to build links between Russian- and Estonian-speakers by encouraging Estonians to reach out to local Russian-speakers. This type of public service campaign could aid in integration not only through building inter-ethnic ties, but also by providing Russian-speakers with an opportunity to practice their Estonian. One such public service campaign, *Integreerunud Eesti* or Integrated Estonia, has been included in Estonian newspapers and journals. These "advertisements" read "Estonia is not a home only for Estonians. Get to know your neighbor" and include a vignette of one or two Russian-speakers who are making an effort to integrate into Estonian society.[27] There are multiple benefits of public service campaigns like *Integreerunud Eesti*: they challenge ethnic stereotypes, they are relatively inexpensive, and they reach a wide audience.

In conclusion, the in-school and extracurricular strategies developed over the last ten years provide valuable lessons for the Ministry of Education to consider when developing policies. First, local involvement and support is crucial for the success of Estonian-language programs. Russian-school educators and parents have voluntarily implemented a number of important changes in their school's Estonian-language program through their own creative efforts and hard-work. Second, the development of a variety of in-school and extracurricular programs reflects the diversity of programs needed to

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24 Richard D. Lambert, "A Scaffolding for Language Policy," *The International Journal of Sociology of Language*, 137 (1999): 22.

25 Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Linguistic Environment Needs to be Changed," *Estonian Review* (September 20-26 1998), 5 (web edition) http://www.vm.ee.eng.review/1998/98092703.htm

26 Students who take this course are sent new course material once a week and respond to language exercises over the computer. Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Estonian Language Course On the Internet," *Estonian Review* (20-26 September 1998), 9 (web edition) http://www.vm.ee/eng/review/1998/98092026.htm

27 One such "advertisement" features Jana, who travels to Hiiumaa every summer to practice her Estonian: "Janat tead?" *Postimees* (Tartu supplement) (28 May 1999), 5. For links to the photos and texts of these advertisements see Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Sotsiaalse reklaami kampaania 'Palju toredaid inimesi,'" www. vm.ee/eng/paljutoredaid.html

service the various Russian-speaking population in Estonia. Reform strategies need to incorporate local resources, consider the success of past language programs, and provide multiple opportunities for both children and adults to learn Estonian. Third, the Ministry of Education should note the source of parents' inspiration for their voluntary creation of in-school and extracurricular alternatives -- expanding educational and economic opportunities for their children. Parental support for their child's future is a stronger incentive for the development and participation in Estonian-language programs than any Ministry of Education policy. The Ministry might consider further developing and regulating the existing Estonian-language programs rather than completely rejecting them for a complete transfer of instruction to Estonian.

CONCLUSION

Integration is the buzzword in post-communist Estonia in the 1990s. Integration is a theme woven into governmental speeches, commented on in newspaper articles, and researched by numerous social scientists in Estonia. The vast media and governmental attention to the integration of non-Estonians raises two important questions: (1) what has been learned about the integration of Russian-speakers into Estonian society during the last nine years (1991-2000)? and (2) how does the interwar experience with integration help the Estonian government with the post-communist integration process, especially in the educational sphere? In this conclusion, I offer a response to these questions and propose issues for further research.

Several features of the post-communist integration process have become evident during the 1990s. First, the interwar strategies for integration fail to provide a comprehensive model for the post-communist integration process. Nevertheless, two developments from the interwar period have reemerged in the post-communist period--the participation of the private sector in the education of Russian-speakers and the curricular emphasis on Estonian language and civics education. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Russian-speaking population developed creative educational programs that offered children and adults a variety of opportunities to learn. Although these programs were not focused on the development of Estonian-language skills as they are in the post-communist period, the organization of these programs and schools reflect the prevalent role of local participation in Russian education during both eras. Another parallel between the interwar and post-communist periods is the curricular emphasis on Estonian language and civics courses. These classes constitute the foundation of the governmental integration programs and were made mandatory in both eras.

Although the interwar experiences with education reflect parallels with post-communist developments, there is an important difference between the two eras: the scope of the integration process is much greater in the 1990s than it was in the 1920s and 1930s. In the post-communist period, the Estonian government has to contend with a Russian-speaking population that has changed dramatically from the interwar period. The Russian-speaking community has quadrupled in size over the last fifty years. The majority of the current Russian-speakers do not have Estonian citizenship or Estonian-language skills; Russian-speakers are a diverse, urban, and multiethnic group. Moreover, there are numerous foreign influences and contributions to the post-communist integration process. During the interwar period, the international community did not play a prominent role in the integration of non-Estonians. Since 1991, the international community (e.g., EU, OSCE, the Open Society Institute, foreign embassies, and UN) and the Russian Federation have actively monitored and influenced the integration process.

A second feature of the post-communist integration process in Estonia involves the Russian-speakers' motivations for Estonian-language acquisition. The primary impetus for Estonian-language study among Russian-speakers is instrumental: they want to increase their education and employment opportunities. The choices made by the Russian-speakers to study Estonian are not, therefore, driven explicitly by a wish to

integrate (i.e., "to join the local society's affairs as full-fledged participants"),[1] but by a desire to achieve economic security. The popularity of Estonian-language programs among Russian-speakers reflects two realities of the post-communist period in Estonia: (1) the success of legislation (e.g., the 1989 and later Language Laws) that mandated the protection and support of a predominantly Estonian economic, political, and educational environment, and (2) the decision made by hundreds of thousands of Russian-speakers to live permanently in Estonia. These Russian-speakers have made their educational choices in post-communist Estonia, especially their decision to study the Estonian language, in conjunction with their decision to stay in Estonia. The impetus to study Estonian for economic security is most evident among the younger generations of Russian-speakers in Estonia. Younger Russian-speakers and their parents are demanding higher quality Estonian instruction in schools. Unfortunately, the demand for better Estonian-language programs cannot be met in every Estonian city due to material and personnel shortages.

A third aspect of the post-communist integration process is connected with decision-making and the power to make changes in the educational sphere. Since 1991, advocates of improved Estonian instruction have been actively involved in a grassroots movement to change the Estonian-language program in Russian schools. The following ideas have been suggested by Russian-speaking and Estonian parents, children, teachers, and administrators: begin Estonian instruction earlier (i.e., in kindergarten or the first grade), have more classes taught in Estonian, and improve the quality of Estonian-language textbooks. The grassroots movement has not only made significant changes in many Russian schools' Estonian-language programs, but has also paid for these improvements through personal donations.

Despite the organization and effectiveness of the grassroots movement in the educational sphere, the Ministry of Education has failed to incorporate local strategies in a nationwide integration strategy. For the first five years after independence (1991-1996), the Ministry failed to improve Estonian-language programs and to develop an organized plan for Estonian-language reform in Russian school. Furthermore, the Ministry continued to support the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Education, after it had been rejected by numerous Estonian and Russian politicians, parents, and educators. Around 1996, the Estonian government changed its approach to integration and education reform. If the first half of the 1990s was marked by general and impractical suggestions for language reform in Russian schools, the second half has been distinguished by a concern for the specific dynamics of integration and the feasibility of suggested governmental school reforms. In short, the Ministry of Education's recent approach to integration through education is much closer to that of the grassroots groups.

Finally, a fourth feature the post-communist efforts to integrate the Estonian Russian-speaking community is that there are regional limitations to Estonian-language education. The heavily Russified linguistic and demographic environment in the northeastern part of Estonia, especially in the cities of Narva, Sillamäe, and Kohtla-Järve, has presented a significant obstacle to the improvement of Estonian-language programs in Russian schools. The most intractable problems in the northeast are a lack of qualified

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[1] Mati Heidmets, Krista Loogma, Tiia Raudma, Katrin Toomel and Linnar Viik, eds., *Estonian Human Development Report 1998* (Tallinn, 1998), 51.

Estonian teachers and the absence of an Estonian-language environment in which students can practice their Estonian. The problem in this region is not, however, a lack of interest in learning Estonian. Students and their parents have pleaded with school officials and the Ministry of Education for improved Estonian-language classes, yet the regional problems are difficult to solve quickly.

Despite the stubborn problems in the northeastern region, schools have managed to improve their Estonian-language programs through the creation of out-of-school language classes. The summer language camps and weekend language classes that are popular in the northeast are indicative of the creative strategies used by the grassroots movement. Although out-of-school Estonian-language programs are not a substitute for improved Estonian-language classes in Russian schools, they do provide an opportunity for students to practice and improve their Estonian.

These are the most important aspects of the Estonian experience with the integration of Russian-speakers in the post-communist period. My research has raised many questions about the integration of Russian-speakers through education, questions that I hope to explore in future research. How does the educational experience of the Estonian Russian-speakers in the post-communist period compare with that of Russian-speakers in other former Soviet republics? Has contact between the younger generation of Russian-speakers and Estonians grown as a result of the increased Estonian-language abilities of these Russian-speakers? How will Estonia's possible accession to the European Union affect the integration of the Russian-speakers through education? How have the strategies of the Russian grassroots movement in education affected the educational decisions made by non-Russian Russian-speakers in Estonia?

APPENDIX

TABLE 6 Ethnic Composition of the Population of Estonia, 1934-2000*

ETHNIC GROUP	1934	% OF TOTAL	1989	% OF TOTAL	1999	% OF TOTAL
Estonians	992 520	88.1	963 281	61.5	942 526	65.2
Russians	92 656	8.2	474 834	30.3	406 049	28.1
Ukrainians	92	0.008	48 271	3.1	36 659	2.5
Belarussians	--	--	27 711	1.7	21 363	1.5
Finns	1 922	0.17	16 622	1.1	13 027	0.9
Jews	4 434	0.39	4 613	0.3	2 338	0.16
Tatars	166	0.01	4 058	0.26	3 246	0.22
Germans	6 346	0.56	3 466	0.22	1 250	0.08
Latvians	5 436	0.48	3 135	0.2	2 658	0.2
Poles	1 608	0.14	3 008	0.2	2 324	0.16
Lithuanians	253	0.02	2 568	0.16	2 206	0.15
Swedes	7 641	0.7	297	0.02	**	**
Others	13 339	1.1	14 095	0.9	11 934	0.83
Total	1 126 413		1 565 662		1 445 580	

* 1999 Estimated population figures; **Figures for Sweden included in "others" category.

Sources: Estonia in Facts, *"The Cultural Autonomy of Ethnic Minorities in Estonia,"* (Tallinn, 1994), 2; Eesti Vabariigi Riikilik Statistikaamet, *Maakondade, linnade, ja alevite rahvastik 1989*, v. 1 (Tallinn, 1990), 32 & Statistical Office of Estonia (ESA), "Ethnic Composition of the Population," 1 http://www.stat.ee/wwwstat/content/I_S_RV_RK/1.html

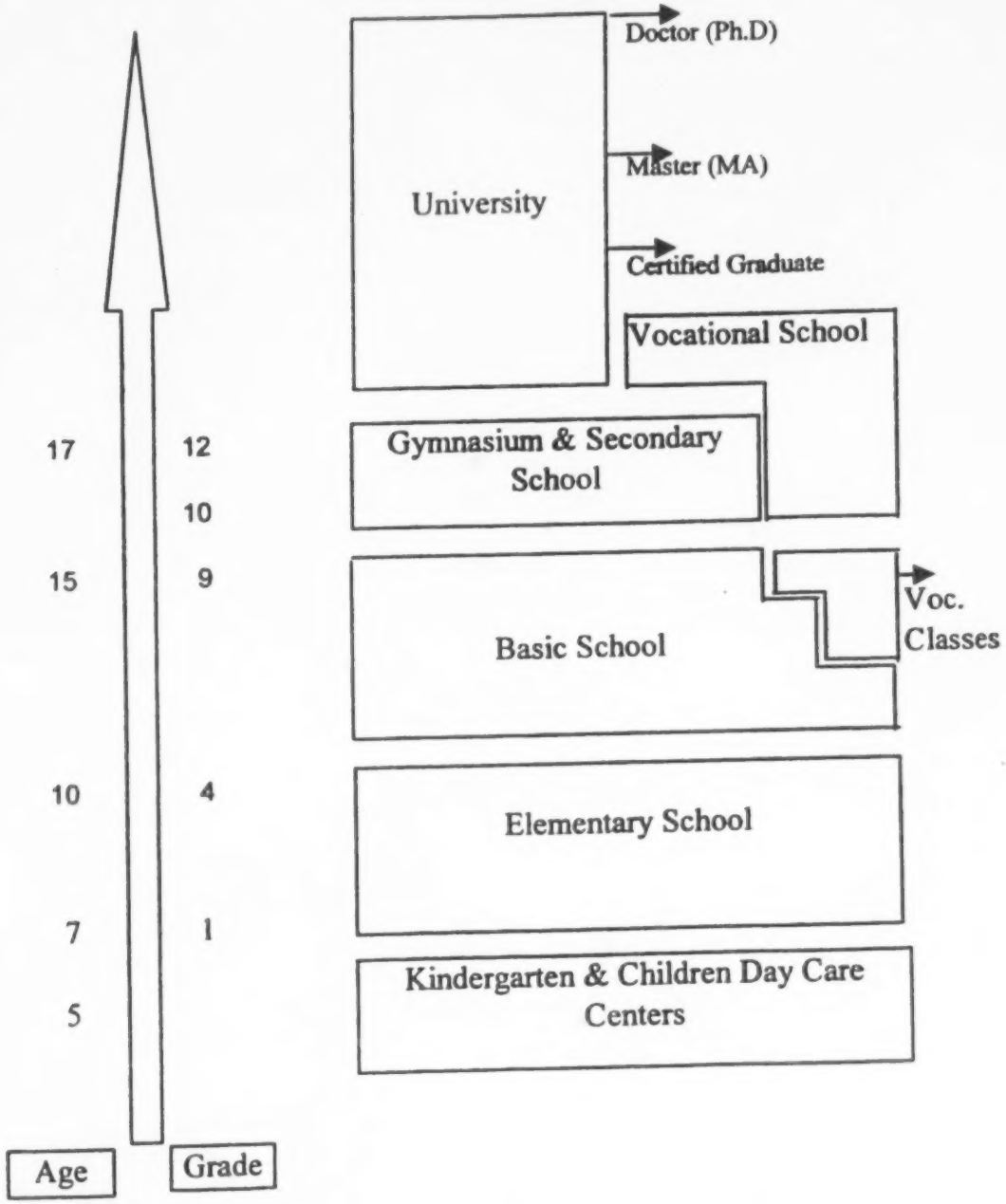
Map 3

Locating Estonia

Learning to Integrate: The Education of Russian-Speakers in Estonia, 1920-2000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 1: Structure of the Estonian Educational System, 2000



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